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LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

BY

REV. ERIC LEWIS, B.A.

FOREWORD BY THE

REV. CANON W. H. M. HAY AITKEN, M.A.

“Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death,
and brought life and immortality to light
through the Gospel.”—2 TIM. i. 10.

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO
"THE PRINCE OF LIFE,"
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
MY SAVIOUR, MY LORD AND MY GOD.

MAY HE USE IT TO MANY, FOR HIS KINGDOM AND HIS GLORY !

CONTENTS

	PAGES
SYNOPSIS	9-24
FOREWORD BY CANON HAY AITKEN	25-29
PREFACE	30
CHAP.	
I. THE QUESTION AT ISSUE	31-39
II. IMMORTALITY—WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE ?	40-53
III. ETERNAL LIFE—THE BELIEVER'S PORTION	54-75
IV. LIFE AND DEATH IN SCRIPTURE	76-94
V. THE DOOM OF THE WICKED—OUR LORD'S TEACHINGS ON HELL	95-107
VI. THE DOOM OF THE WICKED—EVERLASTING PUNISH- MENT	108-129
VII. THE DOOM OF THE WICKED—OUR LORD'S ILLUS- TRATIONS	130-143
VIII. NEW TESTAMENT USAGE OF THE WORDS 'DESTROY,' 'PERISH,' ETC.	144-161
IX. THE LAKE OF FIRE	162-175
X. OUR CASE AND ITS OPPONENTS	176-191
XI. OUR CASE AND ITS OPPONENTS (<i>continued</i>)	192-206
XII. THE CHIEF ADVERSARY OF THIS TRUTH : HIS METHODS AND HIS MOTIVE	207-217
APPENDIX	
A. TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY FATHERS	218-220
B. HADES AND TARTARUS	221-222
INDEX	
SCRIPTURES QUOTED	223-226
AUTHORS QUOTED	227

SYNOPSIS OF THE CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE page 31

THE question of man's *nature* and *ultimate destiny*.

One book only offers a solution—the Bible.

Three conflicting views among Christians on these subjects.

Is this due to insufficient data given to us therein ?

The writer believes that an open-minded inductive study will establish the least popular of these three views ?

Is there a sufficient cause for the popularity of the others ? Yes, a cause discoverable and discovered.

Conclusions obtained by the writer stated at the outset. All three views are in answer to the questions :

I. On what does man's hope of immortality rest ?

II. What are the final destinies of the saved and the lost ?

The common answer to Question I is that all men have an immortal soul or spirit.

The two common answers to Question II are :

(a) The conservative view. That eternal blessedness will be the portion of the saved ; endless conscious suffering the portion of the lost.

(b) The liberal view. That all will be ultimately restored to God's favour by remedial fires of Gehenna.

N.B.—Both these are based on the above-given answer to Question I, whereas the challenge of this book is to declare that unbiassed study of Scripture will establish :

I. That immortality is not a natural endowment of mankind, but a gift of God to regenerate man in Christ.

II. That the portion of the saved will be eternal life, and the portion of the lost will be the second death. [To amplify the latter : that the fiery Gehenna of Scripture involves conscious suffering, the term of which in each case is known to God only, and issues in the ultimate extinction of life of the whole man ; or, otherwise stated, that the eternity of punishment of which Scripture speaks is eternity, not of the process, but of the result.]

The above two theses commonly meet a stubborn barrier of hostile prejudice. Evangelicals often refuse them even scantiest consideration, fearing lest the abandonment of the popular doctrine means a breach in the fundamentals of the faith. These fears are groundless, for restoration of this truth will result in

(i) Salvation centring more than ever in Christ's Person.

(ii) A real Gehenna, more terrible because believable.

(iii) The Gospel becomes a Gospel of LIFE or DEATH.

To find the mind of God revealed in Scripture, on subjects where we differ, there must be first agreement as to right principles of interpretation.

Such principles submitted, as manifestly just and needful :

1. Scripture harmonious, not self-contradictory.
2. Hence exhaustive treatment necessary. True key found will fit every ward, and unlock without pressure.
3. Holy Spirit our Teacher : Scripture self-interpreting.
4. All prepossessions must be laid aside.
5. God promises light to those only who are willing to obey it.

Thus far Scripture viewed on the Divine side—now from the human :

6. Literal interpretation always, unless context or Scripture precedent demands otherwise.
7. Put yourself in the writer's place.
8. The figurative (secondary) meaning of a word is derived from the literal (primary)—and not vice versa.
9. Test definitions by substituting them for words defined.
10. Necessary inference is proof : possible inference is not.
11. Interpret uncertain by certain, not vice versa.
12. Give opponent's case fairly—attribute no unworthy motive.

Now bring the case to Scripture—our sole authority.

CHAPTER II

IMMORTALITY—WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE ? . . . page 40

SCRIPTURE being accepted as our sole authority, differences of conclusion arise from differing interpretations of Scripture terminology—the issue hinging largely upon correct interpretation of Scripture terms.

Hence need to begin with the certain, wherewith to find key to the uncertain.

Did God give Adam an immortal soul or spirit ?

Are his descendants born with this endowment ?

Or, Does God offer man immortality upon conditions ?

Is man's immortality present or future ?—for all or for some only ?

What saith the Scripture ?

N.B.—Immortality is more than life after death, i.e. survival : it is life that can die no more.

I. SCRIPTURE : “ God only hath immortality.”—I Tim. vi. 16. Is this compatible with His having given it to man as an irrevocable gift to be transmitted by him to his posterity ?

Reply : But are not the angels immortal ?

Answer : Yes, but (1) angels do not propagate their species : do not pass on the gift ; (2) their own immortality is (probably) dependent on their obedience.

Corroborations of this conclusion :

1. “ Immortal soul,” a phrase *not* found in Scripture.
2. “ Now unto the King eternal, immortal,” an ascription of praise to God *never* heard to-day.

Why this twofold difference ?

Popular objection : (1) Genesis ii. 7, proves man to be immortal.

Answer : No, for "breath of life," and "living soul" are spoken of *animals*.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Gen. vi. 17. | } "breath of life," nowhere else in Scripture. |
| Gen. vii. 14, 15. | |
| Gen. vii. 21, 22. | |
| Gen. i. 30. | } "living souls" are animals. |
| Job xiii. 10. | |
| Rev. xvi. 3 : | 'living souls' are fish. |

Soul not confined in Scripture to physical life—see Matt. x. 28. But if man cannot kill it, God can.

Reply offered : If soul is not immortal, spirit is.

Answer : Same arguments apply to spirit as used of soul throughout ; "immortal spirit" unscriptural, deathlessness neither stated of man's spirit, nor to be inferred ; man after resurrection a unit ; this all acknowledge.

Popular objection : (2) Gen. i. 26 : Man made in God's image.

Answer : 1. *Unproved* : for it is undefined in what this image consists.

2. If true, would be contradictory to 1 Tim. vi. 16.

3. Man's creation in God's image did not give him omniscience, omnipotence, or omnipresence ? Where is the authority for asserting that it gave him deathlessness ? This is unproven.

Hence narrative of Creation gives no support to the claim of man's natural immortality.

Rather, Gen. iii. 22-24, denies it ; for God drove Adam out of Eden lest he should eat of the Tree of Life, and *live for ever*.

The tree of life reappears hereafter for the saved.—Rev. ii. 7 ; xxii. 1, 2.

II. OUR LORD ON IMMORTALITY (in the Synoptists).

Luke xx. 34-36. Immortality a *prize*.

Inferences } 1. Some unworthy of "that world."
inescapable } 2. Such will die again.

III. SIMILARLY PAUL,

Rom. ii. 6-9. Immortality a quest.

In this passage immortality is in Greek *aphtharsia*. *Aphtharsia*, *phthora*, *phartos*, *aphthartos* (all from *phtheiro*, to wear out, to destroy), in their literal primary signification (see Weymouth's transl.), imperishability, perishability, perishable, imperishable, are found in 2 Tim. i. 10 ; Rom. i. 23 ; 1 Peter i. 4, 18, 23, 24 (cf. Isa. xl. 6-8) ; 2 Peter i. 4 ; 1 Cor. ix. 25 ; Gal. vi. 8 ; Col. ii. 22 (R.V.) ; Rom. viii. 21 ; 1 Cor. xv. 42-45, 50-54 (R.V.).

These passages reveal man's natural evanescence, and his hope of immortality in Christ alone, at the resurrection.

IV. THE DIVINE SOURCE OF OUR IMMORTALITY.

2 Cor. v. 4, 5 : The Spirit, the earnest of our Immortality.

Eph. i. 4 (R.V.) : The Spirit, the earnest of our Inheritance.

Eph. iv. 30 : The Spirit, our seal unto the day of Redemption, (cf. Phil. iii. 20, 21), the day of our manifestation as the sons of God (Rom. viii. 18-23).

Immortality therefore is the inheritance of those born of God by faith in Jesus Christ.—John i. 12, 13.

Retrospect and Summary.

CHAPTER III

ETERNAL LIFE—THE BELIEVER'S PORTION . . . page 54

Question I answered above : Christ, our one hope of Immortality.

Question II. The final destinies (a) of the saved, (b) of the unsaved.

This chapter deals with the destiny of the saved.

John iii. 16 : Eternal life, the believer's portion.

John vi. 51 : Christ defines this as "living for ever."

Difference between Eternal Life and Immortality.

Eternal life is the believer's possession now.—John iii. 36.

Immortality awaits the resurrection.—2 Cor. v. 4.

(Eternal life sometimes spoken as still future, because its present possession is by faith.)

Here a strange fact demands explanation.

Modern creeds write 'eternal blessedness' as the portion of the saved, in place of 'eternal life.'

Similarly, 'endless conscious suffering' replaces 'the second death,' as the portion of the lost.

Why these unauthorized changes ?

Answer. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul has crept into the Christian Faith unauthorized, and has now become accepted as almost a Christian axiom.

[This doctrine is defended on natural grounds, viz. the instinctive expectation of survival.]

Reply : (i) Survival is not deathlessness.

Nor does expectation prove it.

(ii) This God-implemented hope the Gospel meets.]

Testimonies to the absence of this doctrine from Scripture. Gladstone's warning as to its intrusion.

Its intrusion traced to Origen. (Dr. A. W. Brown.)

Gladstone traces its gradual acceptance; declaring no equally sweeping change in doctrine to be known.

Augustine of Hippo warmly advocated

(1) the immortality of the soul, and its logical consequent,

(2) the endless conscious suffering of the lost.

His great and far-reaching influence popularized these doctrines in the Western Church, until in A.D. 1513 a bull of Pope Leo X condemned as heretics all who denied the soul's immortality.

Luther, A.D. 1520, repudiated it as 'monstrous.' William Tyndale repudiated it as unscriptural.

The Prayer books of Edward VI included three Articles on Eschatology. These were expunged under Queen Elizabeth; and the Articles reduced to the present Thirty-Nine.

Hence, Eternal Torment cannot be asserted to have been universally held in the Church from the first; not to be a doctrine binding in the Church of England to-day.

[For the doctrine of the Fathers of the first two centuries on this subject see App. A.]

Herein then is the cause for this change from Scripture terminology. This guess of pagan philosophy, the immortality of the soul, having become almost a Christian axiom, all Scripture has been interpreted in the light of it.

Hence, need of return to Scripture terms in their natural meaning.

OUR LORD'S TEACHINGS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

In John's Gospel our Lord reveals Himself throughout as the Life and the Life-Giver, e.g. :

John v. 18-29, 39, 40.

John vi. 26-63.

John viii. 51, 52.

John xi. 20-27.

Detailed comment shows that our Lord reveals Himself as the One through whom alone we shall "live for ever." The contrasts are significant, e.g. :

Resurrection unto *life* . . . Resurrection unto *judgment*.

The meat that *perisheth* . . . The bread of *life*.

Your fathers ate manna and } He that eateth of this bread shall
died . . . } *live for ever*.

Objection : Life and death here refer to spiritual life and death only for our Lord speaks of His own as *not dying at all*.

Reply : Eternal life begins here and now, but carries with it immortality. *Proof* : Luke xx. 34-36.

- (a) Reason for calling the Christian's death not death at all, but sleep, is because for him at death his *body sleeps* in the grave, and his spirit goes to be with Christ.
- (b) Similarly, for the wicked, "the second death" is sometimes spoken of as if it were the *only* death, e.g. Rom. vi. 21-23.
- (c) Similarly again, the first resurrection is sometimes spoken of as if it were the *only* resurrection.

Why these, *a*, *b* and *c* ? Because the one *goal* is *life*—the other is *death*.

Above argument enforced and confirmed by Christ's word to Martha,
"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

CHAPTER IV

LIFE AND DEATH IN SCRIPTURE *page 76*

REVIEW of Chapter III. Final destinies of the saved and of the lost, tabulated, (1) as stated in Scripture ; (2) as stated in modern creeds. Seriousness of the change, and its cause.

Defence. Life and Death have special spiritual meanings.

Answer : Return to Genesis iii. and thenceforward trace Scripture content and usage of the terms 'life' and 'death.'

Adam's death in Eden—was it immediate ? If so, what death ?

Yes, it was immediate. Cf. Gen. ii. 17, "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (God), with Gen. iii. 5, "in the day ye eat thereof, then shall your eyes be opened" (Satan).

Adam's death in Eden was threefold, as shown by the narrative, viz. :

1. Legal (under condemnation).—Gen. ii. 17.
2. Spiritual (afraid of God).—Gen. iii. 7, 8.
3. Physical (he became mortal).—Gen. iii. 22.

But this was not the whole penalty. (Beyond death lies resurrection unto judgment, and that judgment leads to "the second death.")

With this key test New Testament references to present spiritual death.

Rom. vii., viii. (*passim*).

Eph. ii. 1, 4, 5.

Matt. viii. 22.

1 Tim. v. 4, 6.

This threefold key fits all these perfectly—apply it. The same key applies to present spiritual life, viz :

1. Legal ("no condemnation").—Rom. viii. 1.
2. Spiritual ("fellowship with God").—1 John i. 3.
3. Physical ("life of Jesus manifest in our mortal flesh").—2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.

Thus the unregenerate are now living in the sphere of death ; the regenerate in the sphere of life. But for both the full fruition waits for resurrection.

"Spiritual death," "spiritually dead." Caution *v.* strained use.

These phrases are not scriptural, but admissible with care.

What they *do* mean—living in a sphere of death—as shown above :

Legal—now under condemnation.

Spiritual—out of touch with God.

Physical—mortal, and soon to die.

What they do *not* mean—morally a corpse !

Why not ? Because God does not treat the sinner as such.

He bids him look and live.

Therefore he *can* look.

Nor does the preacher treat his hearer so.

He bids him hear and believe, because hearing he *can* believe.

Offered definitions of Life and Death—give them.

Why are these definitions inadmissible ? Test them.

A recent controversialist proposes the test of principle No. 9 for these offered definitions, viz. : { "Life=union."

e.g. : In Rom. vi. 1-10, substitute
separation for death ;
separate " dead ;
and union " life, etc.

Result : The reader can judge !

See also Isa. xlix. 18 ; Deut. xxxii. 40.

Question unanswered : With whom does God unite, when He says, "I live" ?

Life and death are indefinable terms. No satisfactory definition of life ever yet found. But life and death are contraries.

Death = { forfeiture of life.
 { absence of life.

The penalty of personal transgression is "the second death."

The Second Death—What is it ?

Old Testament light on it.

1. Sacrifice.

2. Law Penalty—Death.

Was this "the second death" ? Yes, Christ treats it so.
Luke x. 28. (Cf. Rom. vi. 23 ; Ezek. xviii. 20.)

Old Testament silence.

Arguments from silence should be accepted with caution.

But, if Endless Torment be true, this silence is misleading.

Whereas, if ultimate dissolution be true, this silence is intelligible.

Old Testament giving only a partial revelation.

Old Testament possible references to the Second Death.

Prov. xxiv. 20. (See R.V. marg. and ref.) Isa. li. 6, 7. (See R.V. marg.)

Our conclusion confirmed, alike by the antitheses of Scripture, and the prominence given to Life.

List of Scriptural Antitheses.

Life, death } etc. etc.
Life, destroy }

List of Scriptures on Life.

Conclusion.

CHAPTER V

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED—OUR LORD'S TEACHINGS
ON HELL

page 95

THREE Greek words for 'Hell'—Gehenna, Hades, Tartarus.

The meaning of each. Hence 'Gehenna' alone concerns our topic.

'Gehenna' in New Testament:

Matt. v. 21, 22.

Matt. vi. 27-30.

Matt. x. 28.

Luke xii. 4, 5.

Matt. xviii. 7-9.

Mark ix. 42-50.

Matt. xxiii. 15, 33.

James iii. 6.

Detailed comment on each passage.

Under Matt. x. 28, it is shown that our Lord elsewhere gives us the key to His meaning in using the words 'destroy,' 'perish' of the doom of the wicked.

<p>viz. : Luke xiii. 3, 5. This key confirmed by Peter and Paul, viz. : Acts viii. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 18.</p>	}	<p>destroy=take life; perish=lose life (to cease to be).</p>
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Matt. xviii. 7-9; Mark ix. 42-50. In these our Lord speaks of Gehenna as *to pūr*, *to aiōnion* and *to pūr asbeston*.

To the meaning of these we have the Divine key given us in Jude 7. (Cf. 2 Peter ii. 4, 6.) Matt. iii. 12.

Key: The eternity of this fire is its eternal result, not its eternal process.

For interpretation of "the worm that dieth not," see Isa. lxvi. 23, 24, which confirms the above conclusion, that the doom spoken of is final dissolution, complete disintegration.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED: EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

page 108

<p>Matt. xxv. 41. Matt. xxv. 46. Mark iii. 29.</p>	}	<p>The three places where our Lord speaks of eternity of punishment.</p>
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Exhaustive analysis of *aiōnios* ('eternal'), as used in LXX. and in New Testament,

AIŌNIOS

Dictum of Bishop of Durham: "To learn meaning of *aiōnios*, look at the noun to which it is attached."

Old Testament uses :

1. Of that which is Divine.

="everlasting"	(a) God Himself.	¹ (12) one ref. given.
	(b) His attributes.	(16) " " "
	(c) His Kingdom.	(5) " " "
	(d) His Covenant.	(14) " " "
	(e) Spiritual experiences.	(15) " " "

2. Of things earthly or dispensational.

="lasting to its limit"	The Rainbow Covenant.	Gen. ix. 16.
	The Mountains.	Hab. iii. 6.
	The Aaronic priesthood.	Exod. xl. 15.
	The Statute of Atonement day.	Num. xxv. 13.
	Israel's possession of Canaan.	Gen. xvii. 8.

3. Of the doom of the wicked.

Jer. xx. 11.	} Scripture interprets Scripture.
Jer. xxiii. 40.	
Dan. xii. 2.	

New Testament uses :

1. Of that which is Divine.

="everlasting"	(a) God Himself.	¹ (2) refs. given.
	(b) His attributes.	(2) " " "
	(c) His Kingdom.	(1) " " "
	(d) His covenant.	(1) " " "
	(e) Spiritual experiences.	(2) " " "
	(f) Condition or locality.	(5) " " "
	(g) Eternal life.	(44) 1 sample.

2. Of things dispensational.

="going back to its limit"	Rom. xvi. 25.	} (Gk.) æonian times.
	2 Tim. i. 9.	
	Titus i. 2.	

3. Of action and activities. Various.

Fire. Matt. xviii. 2 ; xxv. 41 ; Jude 7.
 Punishment. Matt. xxv. 46.
 Judgment. Mark iii. 9 ; Heb. vi. 8.
 Sin. Mark iii. 29 (R.V.).
 Destruction. 2 Thess. i. 9.
 Salvation. Heb. v. 9.
 Redemption. Heb. ix. 12.

To these seven activities Jude 7 has supplied the key "eternity, not of process, but of result."

Test this key. It holds true undeniably of

Judgment.
 Salvation.
 Redemption.

Why not equally then of
 Punishment ?
 Sin ?
 Destruction ?

¹ These bracketed numbers give the number of occurrences of the word, above in Old Testament, below in New Testament.

Per contra, test the orthodox interpretation, viz.: "eternity of process,"

i.e. endless judging,
endless saving,
endless redeeming.

Result: obviously untenable!

By what right then do the orthodox demand that we accept their interpretation?

viz. endless punishing,
endless sinning, }
endless destroying. }

N.B.—It will be noted that eternity of result, not of process, is predicated where action or activity is spoken of: where being, condition, personality are spoken of, then *aiōnios* has its simple sense of everlasting.

Orthodox objection: Scarcely credible that *aiōnios* should have two shades of meaning in one verse, as conditionalists claim in Matt. xxv. 46:

"eternal life . . . eternal punishment."

Reply: But this we find in Scripture thrice elsewhere:

Hab. iii. 6 (R.V.)

"everlasting mountains . . . His ways everlasting."

Rom. xvi. 25, 26 (R.V.)

"through times eternal . . . the eternal God."

Titus i. 2 (R.V.)

"eternal life . . . before times eternal."

Subsidiary study of *aiōn* and its uses in LXX. and New Testament

Of value (i) As confirming the above conclusion *re aiōnios*.

(ii) When we come to deal later with the lake of fire.

Study of *aiōn* is complicated with two difficulties:

a. As with 'hell,' so with *aiōn*, the translation is misleading.

It should be not 'world' but 'age.'

kosmos, 'world' = earth in its *material* framework.

aiōn, 'world' = earth's history in its framework of *time*.

A correct translation reveals that God planned the ages of earth's history, that these ages had their different characteristics:

were and will be limited,
are bounded at either end by eternity,
have the Cross as their pivotal centre.

Scripture examples given from New Testament with comments.

B. Second difficulty.

The word *aiōn* is unmistakably used of periods terminable and interminable. How shall we know which is intended?

Reply: The subject dealt with will determine this.

Examples. (i) From New Testament. { Where *aiōn* is used
(ii) From Old Testament. { of limited periods.¹

N.B.—These are occasional in New Testament; frequent in Old Testament.

Again: phrases containing *aiōn* (translated 'for ever,' 'for ever and ever') are frequently used of temporal judgments, one of which (Edom's) is plainly both symbolic and prophetic of the lake of fire. (Cf. Isa. xxxiv. 11-14, with Rev. xiv. 9-11.)

¹ This is equally true of the backward look, where *aiōn* looks back to the dawn of time (examples given).

CHAPTER VII

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED—OUR LORD'S ILLUSTRATIONS . . page 130

His illustrations : 1. From the Inanimate. 2. From Human Life.

1. Inanimate.	House built on sand.	(Ref.)
	Tares gathered and burned.	"
	Bad fish cast away.	"
	Plant rooted up.	"
	Tree cut down.	"
	Withered branch burnt.	"

All these denote final and utter disintegration.

Our Divine Master uses these illustrations of the doom of the lost (and John the Baptist's illustrations are similar),

Then, *either* He is an untrustworthy Teacher, if He spoke them, with endless conscious suffering present to His mind, for these illustrations represent a far different fate, *or*, the orthodox interpretation is mistaken.

2. Human Life.	Husbandmen destroyed.	(Ref.)
	Rejector ground to powder.	"
	Servant cut asunder.	"
	Galileans slain.	"
	Men killed by fall of tower.	"
	Drowned in the Flood.	"
	Sodom and Gomorrha.	"
	Lot's wife.	"
	Rebels slain.	"
	Debtor held in prison.	"
	Offender cast into outer darkness.	"

All the above, except the last two, denote capital punishment.

Orthodox reply : 1. Yes, but the two last speak of endless imprisonment.*Answer* : This is a possible inference, not a necessary one, for these two illustrations speak of conscious survival, and one of suffering, but they do not speak of endless survival necessarily, hence from them we understand an irrevocable sentence to be meant. Here apply principle of interpretation No. 11, and note the arithmetical result of above illustrations, seventeen in all. On which side is the preponderance ?

2. The death referred to is the death of the body : this death is continued life under changed conditions : hence, it correctly represents endless torment.

Answer : The doom of the wicked is called " the second death." What then is the true analogy between the first death and the second ?

The analogy as claimed by the orthodox and as claimed by the conditionalist tabulated. Which is the more reasonable ? The reader is left to answer.

The above passages (illustrations from human life) set out with comments.

Our conclusion confirmed by illustrations used by Peter and Jude.

Peter.	Fallen angels.	(Ref.)	Jude.	Fallen angels.	(Ref.)
	Flood.	"		Sodom and Gomorrha.	"
	Sodom and	"		Israel in wilderness.	"
	Gomorrha.	"		Korah.	"
	Death of	"		Uprooted trees.	"
	animals.	"		Shooting stars.	"

CHAPTER VIII

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE OF THE WORDS 'DESTROY.'

'PERISH,' ETC. page 144

THE orthodox claim is that the words translated 'destroy,' 'perish,' 'destruction,' 'perdition,' when used of the doom of the lost, always mean continued perpetual existence in a state of conscious suffering and of alienation from God.

The conditionalist claim is that these words, while involving penal suffering in greater or less degree, for longer or shorter time, always mean the ultimate loss of life, both of body and soul, final and complete dissolution.

To test these opposing claims, every passage¹ in the New Testament is quoted arranged as follows, viz. :

1. Uses of *apollumi*, *apōleia*.
2. „ „ *olethros*, *olothreutēs*, *olothreuō*, *exolothreuō*.
3. „ „ *diaphtheirō*, *phtheirō*, *kataphtheirō*, *diaphthora*.

The quotations are set out in two columns, one side giving the literal or physical uses, the other side the spiritual. The various English renderings are given ; and in each case the primary and radical meaning is given first, followed by the second, or figurative meanings.

The result is twofold : it is apparent at a glance that the primary and radical meaning of these words when used of animate beings in a literal and physical sense always is to end life, to take life. Of inanimate things, the literal meaning is equally apparent, viz. "to cause to cease to be." A careful further search reveals that there are passages in which the spiritual use occurs, which give the key to the spiritual meaning, either by the word being used at one and the same time in both a literal and a spiritual sense, or in the context itself determining for us the spiritual meaning by analogy or otherwise. This key, found and tested, is found to hold good in every case ; and it is the meaning which the conditionalist claims for it.

Per contra, the orthodox claim is tested by acceptance of their own definitions of the meaning, and the definition substituted for the word itself in the passages containing its literal and primary sense. The absurdity of the result betrays the falsity of the definitions offered. And this method of test is one recently proposed by a controversial writer on the orthodox side.

Objection to physical meaning of *apōleia*, because only found in New Testament in reference to spiritual doom (except twice).

- Answer :* (i) But spiritual doom involves 'body.'—Matt. x. 28.
(ii) A verbal noun will bear meaning of its verb.
(iii) Cf. 2 Peter ii. 1 (*apōleia*) with 2 Peter ii. 12 (*phthora*.)
Same doom of same persons.
(iv) Cf. 2 Peter iii. 6, 7, 9 (*apōleia*, *apollumi*), equally of the doom of the flood and the lake of fire.

This study equally confirms the conditionalist interpretation. Special reference to *phthora* in 2 Peter ii. 12.

¹ Other Greek words are translated 'destroy' in New Testament, but they do not refer to the doom of the lost ; hence not dealt with here, except Acts xiii. 41, by possible inference only.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAKE OF FIRE page 162

THE BOOK OF REVELATION. Its Keynote—Life for evermore.

The doom of the wicked referred to in the following passages :

Rev. ii. 2, 23 ; xi. 18 ; xiv. 9-11 ; xvii. 8, 11 ; xix. 20 ;
xx. 10-15 ; xxi. 7, 8 ; xxii. 14, 15, 18, 19.

These passages commented on in detail : with careful scrutiny.

Points specially to be observed :

1. Rev. xiv. 9-11, deals with special case.
2. The Spirit interprets Scripture by Scripture : this book is the best interpreter of its own figures, e.g. :
" Smoke ascending for ever " (cf. ch. xix. 3 and xviii. 21).
" No rest day nor night," night and day cease in eternity (see ch. xxii. 5).
3. Rev. xvii. 8, 11 ; xix. 20 ; xx. 10. The fate of the Beast, the False Prophet and the Devil give no support to the eternal torment theory of the wicked dead. For
 - (1) The Beast goeth into *apôleian* (twice stated).
 - (2) " Day and night " cease in eternity.
 - (3) ' The ages of the ages '—not always an unlimited period in Scripture use. (Edersheim acknowledges the possible correctness of this interpretation.)
 - (4) These are special cases.
 - (5) Indeed, are the Beast and the False Prophet human ?
4. Rev. xx. 11-15 ; xxi. 7, 8 ; xxii. 14, 15 : The lake of fire which is the second death. Evidence that this is not interminable, no more death, etc.—Rev. xxi. 4 (R.V.).

Orthodox objection : Wicked still found in the lake of fire, outside the new Jerusalem.—Rev. xxi. 8 ; xxii. 15.

Reply : These statements are not in the description of the new Jerusalem, but a warning to the reader.

Further evidence : Death and Hades cast in.—Rev. xx. 14.

Death abolished.—1 Cor. xv. 26.

No more curse.—Rev. xxii. 3.

God all in all.—1 Cor. xv. 28.

5. 2 Peter iii. 3-13, compared with Rev. xx., xxi., suggests that the final conflagration of the present earth and heavens will be the judgment of the lake of fire, giving place to new heavens and a new earth, wherein God shall be all in all.

CHAPTER X

OUR CASE AND ITS OPPONENTS page 176

RETROSPECTIVE summary of the conditionalist case.

N.B.—The method has been inductive. The results have been cumulative. Scripture has been allowed to interpret Scripture, and self-evidencing keys have thus been found.

The case of our opponents. Defenders of (i) Eternal torment,
(ii) Restorationism,

both depending on the premiss of man's inherent immortality.

Many arguments already dealt with incidentally in our inductive study of Scripture.

Further presentation of their case taken from its best expositors.

1. Bishop Moule, from his "Outlines of Christian Doctrine":

Abandons argument of man's natural immortality, derived from Gen. i. 2, 6, 27 (man made in God's image).

Deduces it from Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

Reply: It proves resurrection, but not deathlessness after resurrection for all. (See Luke xx. 36-38.)

Eternal Torment deducible from John iii. 36.

Reply: This is a non-natural interpretation unless the assumed premiss is granted. The inference is barely possible. Bishop Moule betrays the weakness of his case by the thrice-repeated words 'seems,' and by his negative conclusion.

Eternal Torment claimed from

Matt. xxv. 46; Rev. xiv. 11; xx. 10; xx. 14, 15.

Reply: All these met above: arguments briefly recapitulated here.

2. Dr. Scofield, from "Notes in the Scofield Bible."

[N.B.—Marked examples therein of artificial interpretation.]

(i) Note on *apollumi*, under John iii. 16.

Reply: This transgresses law of interpretation No. 8. (See chap. i.)

(ii) Note on *olethros*, under 1 Cor. v. 5.

Reply: This transgresses the same law.

(iii) Note on 'Man,' under Gen. i. 26.

Note on 'The Second Death,' under Rev. xx. 14.

Reply: A comparison of these shows that Dr. Scofield uses 'death' in two inconvertible senses. His own definition destroys the natural analogy between the first and second death, and leaves the second only second as subsequent in time.

Again, Dr. Scofield deduces Eternal Torment of all from the fate of the Beast and the False Prophet; elsewhere—he assumes it.

Reply: The case of the Beast and the False Prophet is, as shown in chap. ix. 1, exceptional. 2. Are they men, or incarnate demons? If the latter, a demon is destructible.—Mark i. 24. 3. The Beast goeth unto destruction.—Rev. xvii. 8-11: *apolesai*.

3. Dr. Pearson, on the Creed.

Inference for two kinds of eternal life, one of bliss, one of woe, from analogy of two resurrections.

Reply: This is only a surmise. This analogy inexact. More exact analogy from first and second death refutes Dr. Pearson.

CHAPTER XI

OUR CASE AND ITS OPPONENTS (*continued*) *page* 192

Two a priori objections by defenders of Eternal Torment.

1. Argument from Calvary.

Calvary declares the infinite nature of sin.

Infinite sin demands an infinite punishment, hence, the penalty is endless torment.

Reply : Should the finite sinner presume to judge what the cost of Calvary was to our God ? God Himself maintains a divine reserve on this. (See John iii. 16.)

2. Argument from moral intuition.

Our sense of the hideousness of sin demands nothing less than everlasting anguish as the sinner's penalty.

Reply : A daring claim indeed ! To set up our own moral intuition as judge. Would this advocate claim this criterion for other doctrines, e.g. for transubstantiation ?

Scripture, and Scripture alone, our authority.

Two a priori assaults upon our Position.

1. To be raised only to die again is incredible.

Reply : This ignores (i) The value and place of Judgment.
(ii) That Judgment and Penalty are in the body for sins committed in the body.

2. No such difference apparent in men now living, as the difference of constitution and destiny between mortals and immortals would imply.

Reply : 1. Unfair—None are immortal *yet*.

2. This *is* the difference—too little recognized.

See 2 Peter i. 4 (R.V.) ; John iii. 3, 6 ; Gal. vi. 8.

The two greatest lacks in to-day's preaching spring out of these two objections, viz. Silence *re* Judgment and Doom.

Silence *re* solemn issue of Life or Death.

Common attacks upon the conditionalist doctrine and its exponents.

1. Annihilation—an unfair term.

2. Imputation of motive : (a) Rebellion against God's severity.
(b) Shallow views of sin.

This is violation of principle 12.

Appeal to advocates of Eternal Torment to face the logical consequences of their own position.

They involve themselves by logical necessity in maintaining

- (a) The Eternity of Sin.
- (b) The creation of a special body for the wicked dead, capable of endless suffering.
- (c) Joy of the redeemed to behold the sufferings of the damned.
- (d) The eternal activity of Death.
- (e) A denial (by logical necessity) of the finished work of Christ.

The above substantiated. These are some of the falsehoods declared by Gladstone to be produced by " rational retribution " from the unauthorized entrance into Christian doctrine of a philosophical speculation, the soul's immortality.

Universalism replied to.

This ' liberal view ' of the doom of the wicked not dealt with specifically above, because it falls with the fall of the premiss of the soul's immortality.

Whence derived ?

- (i) From revulsion against Eternal Torment.
- (ii) From Scriptures expressive of the width of God's grace and of His desire to embrace all therein.

Reply : But it ignores Man's free-will.
 God's righteousness.
 The majesty of law.

Sample Scriptures claimed to uphold it :

1 Tim. iv. 10.	2 Cor. v. 19.
Eph. i. 10.	1 Cor. xv. 28.

Above Scriptures expounded, fail to sustain Universalist case.

A Final Difficulty.

If conditionalism be true, Why so few prominent supporters ?

Reply : (i) Hostility and possible loss of position to face.
 (ii) Supporters living to-day include
 Canon Hay Aitken,
 Rev. G. C. Grubb.

Testimony to the latter's mission in Toronto by an advocate of Eternal Torment.

(iii) Testimonies from recent theologians and others :

R. W. Dale, D.D.,
 Prof. Butler.,
 Prof. Sir G. G. Stokes, Bart.,
 Prof. J. Agar Beet,

to the value of this doctrine, and the need for reconsideration.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHIEF ADVERSARY OF THIS TRUTH : HIS METHODS

AND HIS MOTIVE *page 207*

THE Devil, eager to prevent restoration of the pristine Gospel.

His devices.

1. He persuades Evangelicals that loyalty to Scripture demands the doctrine of endless torment.
2. He upbraids its advocates thus :
 - (a) "Sinners will take advantage of it."
 - (b) "You are dishonouring the Cross of Christ."
 - (c) "You are in bad company," thus appealing to good motives.

Answer : I. These fears are groundless.

II. Scripture our sole criterion of truth.

3. Two dangers for the rediscoverer of Scriptural truth.
 - I. Fanaticism—lack of balance.
 - II. Spiritual pride—a moral fall, or lapse into errors.
 Both results repel conservative Christians.
4. On this doctrine of human immortality the Devil has reared the anti-Christian claim of the deification of man.
 Evangelical Christians have laid the basis ; therefore they cannot overthrow the superstructure.
5. Revulsion against endless torment has brought in a conspiracy of pulpit silence *re* judgment to come.
 This silence is disastrous ; it tends to condone sin.
 It forgets the righteousness of God's government.
 Warning of David's example.

SYNOPSIS OF THE CONTENTS

6. Revulsion against endless torment has driven seeking souls away from Christ.
A sad example of four young men.
7. Revulsion against endless torment has produced restorationism and universalism.
These are false hopes.
8. The dogma of endless torment has injuriously affected its own advocates,
making them bitter ;
" " unfair ;
" " disfellowship their brethren.

His motive. Why the Devil's marked hostility to " Life in Christ " ?

1. He sees that it would restore to the Gospel :
Its pristine simplicity for all.
Its missionary appeal to the heathen.
Its humbling message to the cultured.
2. It would restore Christ's Resurrection to its central place.

APPENDIX A

TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY FATHERS *page 218*

First century. Clement of Rome.
Barnabas.
Ignatius.
Hermas.

Second century. Justin Martyr.
Tatian.
Theophilus.
Irenæus.
Clement of Alexandria.

Table showing nature and number of eschatological references in the writings of these Fathers.

APPENDIX B

HADES AND TARTARUS *page 221*

All the New Testament references to each set out.

FOREWORD

BY THE REV. W. H. M. HAY AITKEN, M.A.
CANON OF NORWICH, ENGLAND

WHAT does Holy Scripture really teach with regard to the ultimate doom of the impenitent? What is the nature of that dread penalty which revelation indicates as the wages of human sin? This is the question with which our author deals in the following pages, and surely all Christian people must admit the importance of the enquiry. We stand face to face with the fact that the terms employed by the sacred writers in dealing with this subject have been diversely interpreted; the question therefore that has to be decided is this, Which of the differing interpretations is the true one? The question can only be answered by a careful and painstaking examination of the terms thus employed. We shall have to lay aside all prejudice, and any disposition to arrive at a hasty conclusion, and patiently pursue a process of critical enquiry, endeavouring to discover the true significance of the words used by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and honestly discriminating between their original and natural meaning and any traditional significance that for one cause or another may have become attached to them.

It is to this task that our author has addressed himself; and whether we agree or disagree with his conclusions, I venture to think that all who peruse these pages must admit the thoroughness and transparent honesty of thought and purpose with which he has pursued his investigations. He has strictly confined himself to the consideration of the teaching of Scripture on this subject, save in certain passages where he has had to meet objec-

tions urged on other than Scriptural grounds. It was by the study of his Bible that he was himself led to the conclusions at which he has arrived, and by an appeal to it he is content that they stand or fall.

And so the reader will understand that we have brought before us in this volume no a priori speculations as to what is or is not credible in the economy of Divine judgment ; still less have we here any rhetorical appeal to our moral sensibilities and our inherent sense of justice. Our author leaves it to others to discuss the question from the ethical standpoint, only brushing aside from time to time palpable sophistries, that do duty for arguments with certain of his opponents, such for instance as the misuse of the word " annihilation." His one object throughout is to show that the voice of Revelation affirms the doctrine which he teaches, and does not affirm the appalling tenets which still arrogate to themselves the title of " orthodox." This object he seeks to compass by a process of calm, clear and logical reasoning that must needs appeal to the thoughtful and unprejudiced. There is nothing of the special pleader in his treatment of the sacred text. He regards the Bible as to a great extent its own interpreter, the use in one passage of the words under consideration elucidating their significance in another. It is evident from the earnestness of his tone that our author does not regard the truth (as he believes it to be) on which he insists, as of only a negative value. It is not only his desire to confute a grievous and God-dishonouring error ; he believes that it is for the glory of God and for the good of the souls of men that this error should be displaced by the proclamation of a solemn God-given truth. Is he not right in thus regarding it ? It is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that the doctrine of Eternal Torment has lost its hold on the common sense and moral sensibilities of mankind. People don't and won't believe that an infinitely good and merciful God can consign His own offspring (Acts xvii. 28, 29) to measureless æons of torture in retribution for the sins and weaknesses of a few swiftly passing years here on earth. Our preachers

have the wit to discern that people are repelled but not alarmed by the preaching of such impossible terrors, and therefore for the most part they avoid the subject altogether ; and thus the sanctions of the Divine law are ignored, and the argument of fear which our Lord Himself did not hesitate to employ has utterly ceased to affect the minds or imaginations of the men and women of our period. People have outgrown belief in the appalling terrors which once used to alarm those whom the message of God's love failed to reach ; but what have we to put in their place ? Is the Divine law to be bereft of its sanctions altogether, and to become as impotent as a human enactment would be that was backed by no penalties ? We dare not tell our people that they may sin with impunity, at any rate so far as the other world is concerned, for all is certain to come right at last. To me it seems as if such teaching must be positively demoralizing, but what are we to substitute for it ? What if we fall back on the example of the ancient prophet, and thunder forth from our pulpits his uncompromising message, " O wicked man, thou shalt surely die " ? His own moral sense may lead a man to feel within himself, " I do not deserve eternal torture, and I don't believe that a just God would inflict any such disproportionate doom on me." But would he be equally successful in dealing with his moral sense if he had to confess, " I judged myself unworthy of eternal life by putting it from me, and now God has left me to reap the harvest of destruction which He told me would spring from my sowing to the flesh." Could his moral sense challenge the justice of such a doom ? I cannot but believe that the more widely education spreads, and men learn and are trained to think, and to think for themselves, untrammelled with traditions from the past, the less will they be able to accept what some would still call the orthodox view of eternal punishment. But if a further and more exhaustive study of the Bible leads us to deliver the same message as our Master did when He exclaimed, " What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose himself ? " shall we

not commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God? Must not reasonable men feel in their own hearts that if they wilfully refuse the offer of life, made to them at the cost of a Saviour's death, they certainly deserve to forfeit that which they have thus despised? Thus, knowing the true "terror of the Lord," we may hope to arrest and persuade those whom higher motives have not availed to reach.

For surely this is no light matter—this wage of sin which is death. God has implanted in all of us the instinct of self-preservation; and when men realize that this is a question of life or death, that instinct must appeal with no small force on the side of accepting the evangel of life for evermore. Let a man understand that God sets before him life or death, and surely the thought of the appalling loss on the one hand, and the immeasurable gain on the other must at least strongly dispose him to the divinely given exhortation, "Therefore choose life."

It is not for me in this brief prefatory note to anticipate the arguments which our author has elaborated with such painstaking care. I will only say that they are of a kind to deserve the attentive consideration of all who are interested in this most important subject: and surely all true Christians ought to be interested in it. To my own mind the conclusion at which he has arrived seems irresistible, for I have not succeeded in finding any flaws in his logic or any wresting of Scripture to suit his theories. How the dread sanctions of the law will be administered is a matter that concerns the lawgiver rather than ourselves; but we need to bear in mind that His very justice is only one of the modes in which His eternal and changeless love operates, for while justice is His attribute, love is His essence. But while we can and must with reverent confidence leave the administration of His judgment to the great Judge of all, it is our part to sound the note of warning as well as the invitation of mercy, and ever to bear in mind that it is the same Divine revelation that tells us all we know of God's great mercy in

Christ Jesus, that solemnly affirms that the wages of sin is death.

I commend the pages that follow to the honest and careful consideration of the reader. Let him peruse them with a fair and unprejudiced mind, and with a clear apprehension of the principles laid down as preliminary to the enquiry, which surely may be regarded as axiomatic. Above all, let him approach the enquiry in a prayerful spirit, and with an earnest desire to "buy the truth," whatever price he may have to pay for it, and then I have little doubt as to what the sequel will be.

W. H. M. HAY AITKEN.

PREFACE

THE writer would leave his book to give its own message. But on its threshold he would express his warm and grateful thanks to Canon Hay Aitken for his valuable Foreword, and would ask for its thoughtful perusal by all before they begin the book itself. Coming from one of the greatest Mission preachers of our age, from one who since far back in the last century has been a proved soul-winner and a sound Bible-teacher, coming as the fruit of a rich and well-ripened experience, it should command a respectful attention, and go far to disarm much prevailing prejudice.

Its testimony seems to the writer all the more remarkable in light of the fact that he himself is personally a stranger to Canon Aitken. The Canon's opinion of the book, of its purpose and its method, has therefore been formed solely on the ground of its own contents.

May the Lord use for His glory and His kingdom all that herein is in accordance with His revealed will. Anything contrary thereto may He bring to light, that it may be put away.

ERIC LEWIS.

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April 11th, 1924.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

CHAPTER I

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.—JER. VI. 16.

These were more noble than they in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.—ACTS XVII. 11.

Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.—I THESS. V. 21.

THE question of man's nature and ultimate destiny always has commanded and always will command the deep interest of thoughtful minds. What are we? Where are we going? What goals await us in the great hereafter? Man is ever longing for clear light on these problems of life and death.

It will be readily acknowledged that we have one book, and one book only, that has any worthy claim to give us a divine revelation, that book in itself a library of books and yet a unit; for from its first page to its last it claims to give us by revelation from our Creator a comprehensive survey, bounded at either end by a timeless eternity, a survey that declares to us God's view of man, God's purposes for man, and God's methods with man.

If then within the covers of that book we do not find a sure and intelligible account of man's relationship to his Maker and of his ultimate destiny, we shall certainly not find it elsewhere. How man came to be, what he is, what is his final goal—on these topics the book of nature is silent; these problems baffle alike the speculations of philosophy and the theories of science. At the gateways of Life and Death man stands humbled, speechless: and

if he be wise, he will bow with reverent childlike faith to receive such light as his Creator has been pleased graciously to vouchsafe to him.

The writer rejoices to number himself among those who have found the Bible to be a revelation self-evidencingly divine ; and for such this book is written, as also for all who, having any doubt of its inspiration, its accuracy, or its authority, are ready to come to it with the plea, " O God, if there be a God, and if this be Thy Word, shew me." To all such the writer believes that the conclusions deduced from the Bible by humble open-minded approach will commend themselves to heart and mind and conscience as being worthy of a God of perfect righteousness and perfect love. And if our gracious God has seen fit to give to man a revelation on these high and holy themes, we may reasonably expect that such revelation will be intelligible to the humble mind.

We are faced, however, with the fact of the presence of conflicting views among Christians as to what the Bible teaches on these subjects. Now it is at least a priori conceivable that God might deem it better for us that He should at present leave the subject only dimly outlined ; and that, this being so, differences of opinion spring from an unwise attempt to base a satisfying conclusion upon insufficient data. If so, we shall expect to find indications of this in His Word ; and it will then be our wisdom to submit, not to dogmatize, but to leave it where He has left it—for us an unsolved problem, and to wait for the day when He shall be pleased to unfold it, saying with the great apostle, " Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face ; now we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known."—1 Cor. xiii. 12. But the Bible itself must decide for us whether the solution of these problems is offered to us or withheld. If offered, plainly God wants us to know them ; if withheld, we shall be wise to say with Moses, " The secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children." —Deut. xxix. 29.

Now it is a matter of common knowledge that at least three such conflicting views hold the field, radically different and competing with each other for adoption ; two more popular, one less known and less well recognized. Of these the writer has not adopted one and endeavoured to find support for it at the expense of the other two. Rather is he offering to the reader the results as they came to him in the course of a patient inductive study of God's Word, coming to that Word with open mind, and with no prejudice in favour of one view or the other, or with any human conclusion to start with, coming to learn what the Book had to say for itself on the subject. And he ventures to believe that the candid reader who will travel with him through the Scriptures bearing on the subject in a survey which seeks to be exhaustive will come to share the author's own astonishment at the result, viz. that Scripture fairly interpreted and exhaustively surveyed, so far from leaving the conclusion vague and uncertain, points by evidences that are cumulative and emphatic, not to the most common view, which appears in places to lie upon the surface of the sacred page, but to the least generally accepted of the three.

In building up a positive conclusion inductively, it will appear incidentally as we proceed that the more usual and traditional theories fail to stand the test of Scripture. And when the enquiring mind asks, and rightly asks, How then did these views come to find wide acceptance, it will be found that there is a deep-seated cause for this, not only discoverable but discovered, which has resulted in these misinterpretations of Scripture, a cause recognized and deplored by not a few eminent and saintly theologians, though to the Christian public at large unrecognized and scarcely dreamed of.

Perhaps it will be well for the sake of clearness that the conclusions as ultimately obtained be set before the reader in definite terms at the outset. But let him observe throughout as he reads that this is not a preconceived opinion but a result slowly built up and borne in upon the mind by cumulative Scripture evidences. The two

questions then for which this book seeks the Scriptural answer are these :—

- I. On what does man's hope of immortality rest ?
- II. What are the final destinies respectively of the righteous and of the unrighteous, of the saved and of the lost ?

To the first of these questions the answer commonly given is that man at his creation received from God an immortal soul or spirit, and that all his descendants are similarly constituted.

To the second question the two answers which at present find widest acceptance are as follows :—

- (a) That eternal blessedness will be the portion of the saved, and everlasting conscious suffering the portion of the lost. This may be called the conservative view.
- (b) That none will be finally lost, but that all, being originally children of God, will be ultimately restored to God's favour, the fires of Gehenna being remedial and disciplinary rather than penal. This may be termed the liberal view.

It will be observed that both the above views are based on the belief that man, in soul or spirit, is by nature an immortal being.

Whereas the challenge of this book is to declare that the true Scriptural answer to the above questions, demonstrable to any open-minded Bible student, who is willing and able to lay aside all preconceptions and traditions of men, and to accept the statements of God's Word at their face value, will be found to be as follows :—

- I. That immortality is revealed to be, not a natural endowment of mankind, but a gift of God to regenerate man in Christ.
- II. That the portion of the saved will be eternal life, and the portion of the lost will be the second death. To amplify the latter, that the fiery

Gehenna of Scripture involves conscious suffering, the term of which in each case is known to God only, and issues in the ultimate extinction of life of the whole man ; or, otherwise stated, that the eternity of punishment of which Scripture speaks is eternity, not of the process, but of the result.

The writer is, of course, aware that the above two theses have a stubborn barrier of hostile prejudice to encounter ; indeed, too commonly he has found them refused even the scantiest consideration by evangelicals, who tremble lest the overthrow of the conservative view should cause a breach in the fundamentals of the faith, among which, unhappily, the doctrine of eternal torment has been all too frequently reckoned. For the allaying of these fears the writer would therefore ask to be permitted at the outset to point out that three results of exceeding value may be expected to follow if the above are indeed the conclusions to be drawn from Scripture, viz. :—

- (i) Salvation will be found to centre yet more than ever in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, when it is seen that He and He alone is the source of human immortality.
- (ii) In place of a hell of conscious suffering in which the victims writhe to all eternity, we shall have a Scriptural Gehenna unspeakably terrible, indeed the more terrible because believable and manifestly just, where the finally impenitent will be consumed, burnt up like the chaff with unquenchable fire.
- (iii) The Gospel then becomes a Gospel, not merely of reward or loss, but of LIFE or DEATH, in all their natural simplicity and depth of meaning.

Then the precious and familiar words become radiant with new and far-reaching light, that “ Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.”

Now before Christians can expect to reach a common

conclusion as to what Scripture teaches on subjects on which their views at present differ, both sides honestly desiring to ascertain the mind of God on the question at issue, it will obviously be necessary that agreement first be reached as to what constitute sound principles of interpretation of the Divine Word.

The writer would therefore offer the following as right principles of interpretation, most of them already well recognized, others not so often stated, perhaps, but such as will, it is believed, commend themselves to all truth seekers by their manifest justice or needfulness.

1. If all Scripture be God-given (and we believe it to be so), then all Scripture teaching on a given subject, when rightly interpreted, will be found to be harmonious and not self-contradictory. On the other hand, in a progressive revelation, such as that vouchsafed to us in the Old and New Testaments, we may expect to find fuller light given to us in the New Testament than in the Old.

2. To reach with certainty the revealed mind of God on a given subject, we shall need to have before us all the statements of God's Word on that subject, or at least a résumé of those statements which is all-comprehensive. The true conclusion will be one that fits every statement without forcing the language. Just as a key will be recognized to be the right key for a given lock with many wards by the ease with which it enters and turns the lock, so is it with God's Word ; and the perfect fit discovered and tested, found to open every ward without pressure, will be itself an indication that we have found the true key.

3. If the first Apostles, after three years' companionship with Jesus in His earthly ministry, needed the risen Christ to "open their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures,"¹ we too need divine illumination from the same source. We have His promise of a divine interpreter given to us in the Person of the Holy Spirit, who will "guide us into all truth."² We shall find that one leading method of that Spirit who Himself

¹ Luke xxiv. 45.

² John xvi. 13.

inspired the written Word is to interpret Scripture by Scripture.

4. In humble dependence therefore upon that Holy Spirit as our guide, we must be willing to lay aside every preconceived opinion and prepossession, and to come with open mind to learn "what saith the Lord?"

5. Our Saviour laid down the principle for all who seek to approach God that "if any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself."¹ If then an obedient heart is necessary for a man to learn whether Christ's teaching is of human or divine origin, we may safely apply the same principle to obtain a right understanding of God's Word in any particular. God does not promise to give light to those who are unwilling to obey it. Obedience to truth implies, of course, both its acceptance and willingness also upon fit occasion to proclaim it.

Thus far we have been considering the book on its divine side, and in that light agreeing upon the principles which should guide us in the search for truth therefrom. The book is human as well as divine; the message of God comes to us in human language, and it is therefore subject to the principles that guide us in the endeavour to ascertain the true and full meaning of any human document. The following principles, applicable to the treatment of all human documents, will doubtless command general assent.

6. Interpret the language of Scripture (as of any other document) in its simple, obvious, direct and natural meaning, unless the context itself, or some other inescapable reason, shows that the words are to be understood figuratively, symbolically, or in a limited sense.

7. To understand the primary and natural meanings of the words of Scripture we must place ourselves as far as possible in the position of those to whom the message was first spoken or written, and see what it meant to them.

8. The figurative or secondary meanings in which words are sometimes used will be found to be derived from the

¹ John vii. 17 (R.V.).

natural and primary meaning of the word, and should be interpreted thereby. To reverse the process, and to interpret the natural meaning by the figurative, the primary by the secondary, or to argue as if the occasional and exceptional meaning is to control the usual and radical meaning, will invariably land the person who thus argues into error, if not into absurdity.

9. When a definition is offered, claiming to be the true interpretation of the meaning of a word, its correctness can always be tested by substituting the definition for the word itself in other passages where the word occurs, and seeing if it gives sense or otherwise. A true definition will always give sense, a false definition will betray itself by failure to do so.

10. In seeking Scripture proof of any doctrine, we must remember that there is a vast difference between necessary inference and possible. A necessary inference is as good evidence as a direct statement. Possible inference, on the contrary, only becomes valid evidence when it is shown to be in harmony with some direct statement or necessary inference elsewhere. It then becomes secondary and supplementary evidence, but standing alone it is entirely insufficient on which to rest a deduction. In claiming doctrines as Scriptural, perhaps more errors arise from lack of observance of this principle than from any other cause.

11. We must interpret the uncertain by the certain, not vice versa, i.e. if a passage is capable of two interpretations, that must have the preference which is in harmony with the known teaching of the Word in other places.

12. Always give the case of an opponent fairly and fully, nor should an unworthy motive be attributed.

If then Scripture be accepted as our only revelation of the divine will, and if it be conceded that the above principles of its interpretation are reasonable and just, it should not be impossible for honest and true hearts to arrive at a common understanding of what God has revealed to us regarding both the nature and destiny of

man. Is immortality an essential characteristic of all human kind in some portion of his being, or is man's life on earth a probation in which his immortality depends upon his accepting its God-given conditions? "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."
—Is. viii. 20.

By Scripture then let this question be judged. By Scripture alone can it be settled.

CHAPTER II

IMMORTALITY—WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

IN the previous chapter we have defined the issue of this book, and we hope have made it clear that the ground on which the writer expects to show that immortality is not a natural attribute of human nature, but a gift offered to fallen man in and by Christ, is the ground on which every faithful lover of God's Word stands; viz., that the Bible is our divine revelation, and that that Word will yield a knowledge of God's will to every humble seeker who under the guidance of His Spirit and with just principles of interpretation seeks for light therefrom.

In seeking for Scripture light upon the question at issue it will be necessary to adhere closely to the principles of interpretation defined in Chapter I, if, as the writer believes, they command acceptance as sound and just. We are approaching a subject in which a correct conclusion turns largely if not entirely upon a correct interpretation of Scripture terminology, i.e. what are the true meanings of the terms 'life' and 'death,' 'to be saved,' 'to perish' or 'be lost,' and their corresponding substantives. A large number of Scriptures will at first be indeterminate in meaning, where the context is open to either interpretation. If therefore we are to judge the uncertain by the certain, we must begin with passages whose meaning is incontrovertibly clear. Once the key is thus discovered, it will be of use to unlock passages of which the context leaves the meaning indeterminate. And if the key is found to unlock every passage to which it is applied, making all harmonious, so will the conclusion grow to be irresistible that we have indeed obtained the true and divine key.

With these provisos, we now come to the question, What has Scripture to say of the immortality of man? Does it bear out the common belief that God gave to Adam an immortal soul or spirit,¹ and that every human being is born into the world with this immortality as an essential and present attribute of one constituent of his being, in which case man in his soul or spirit is the present possessor of immortality? Or does Scripture reveal, on the contrary, that man forfeited immortality through sin, but that it is offered to him anew by God in Christ as a future inheritance, assured now by his participation in life divine, but to be enjoyed in realization hereafter? Is man's immortality present or future? Is it the privilege of all or of some only? What saith the Scripture?

And here a word of caution is needed at the outset, as the term 'immortality' is frequently but incorrectly used as if it were synonymous with life after death. Whereas immortality, by derivation alike in English and in Greek, means deathlessness, a life that can die no more. Life after death and deathlessness are not interchangeable terms, unless it be established that life given back after death can never die again—the very question at issue.

On the threshold of the subject we are met by a statement of the Apostle Paul, simple, dogmatic, absolute, that God alone is the present possessor of immortality. Writing to Timothy, in one of those sudden outbursts of praise, so characteristic of the great apostle, he speaks of God as

“the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.”
—1 Tim. vi. 16.

¹ The above words “immortal soul or spirit” are used advisedly, because in popular religious phraseology the two are commonly used as practically synonymous. From this point onwards, however, we shall treat soul and spirit as distinct, as Scripture does.—Heb. iv. 12; 1 Thess. v. 23.

Here surely is a plain negation of the claim that man has inherent immortality, present in one part of his being. Is it conceivable that Paul could have written thus of God had he believed that our Creator gave to Adam an immortal soul which all his descendants inherited as their natural birthright? Can any one be truthfully said to be the sole present possessor of a privilege or attribute which he has long since conferred on countless others as an irrevocable gift? Here the objection may be raised, 'But are not the angels immortal? And if so, has not God already bestowed the gift on them? And yet Paul was still able to say of Him that He only hath immortality.' To this it is surely a fair answer, (i) that we do not know that God has given to the angels their immortality as an irrevocable gift. The angels are obedient to God's will, perfectly and always—excepting those that sinned and their leader Satan. How do we know but that the continuance of their immortality is dependent upon the continuance of their obedience? (ii) The angels stand in a very different category from man in this matter, for they are not reproductive, whereas God has given to man the power of reproductivity. If immortality is a natural attribute of human nature, we have the tremendous fact that sinful, finite man can and does bring into the world an immortal being, and that this process is in constant continuance, so that the number of beings possessed of immortality will continue to be multiplied so long as human nature remains in its present condition on earth. If this were true, that man is perpetually giving birth to fresh immortal beings, how then could it be truly said of God that He alone hath immortality? (iii) And this conclusion is strengthened by the following corroborative facts. Scripture never uses the common, modern phrase 'an immortal soul' in speaking of man; nor do we hear the modern preacher ascribing immortality to God¹ as a special prerogative of Godhead

¹ Compare with this Paul's ascription of praise in 1 Timothy i. 17, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible." [Immortal is here 'aphthartos,' lit. imperishable. The correctness of the A.V. translation here is argued further on.]

in the manner of Paul. This marked difference between the phraseology of the modern pulpit and of Scripture is significant, and suggests that herein the preacher of to-day (however unconsciously to himself) has strayed from the path of Scripture.

But it will be promptly replied, "Have we not in the Scripture narrative of the creation of man sufficient warrant for believing his soul to be immortal? Is it not written in Genesis ii. 7 that 'God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul'? And may we not fairly conclude that the inbreathing of divine life made his soul immortal"? We answer at once; so far is this from being a necessary inference deducible from the words, it is not even a possible inference: for in Scripture usage the terms 'breath of life' and 'living soul' are both used of the animal creation.

"And behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die."—Gen. vi. 17.

"And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life,"

'they' being previously enumerated as Noah and his family,

"and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort."—Gen. vii. 14, 15.

"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle and of beast and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils is the breath of life (R.V. the breath of the spirit of life) of all that was in the dry land died."—Gen. vii. 21, 22.

These with Genesis ii. 7 are the only Scriptures where the phrase 'breath of life' occurs. And, startling as it sounds to modern ears, the Hebrew words for 'living

soul ' in the Old Testament and the Greek equivalent in the New Testament are applied to animals as well as men, showing that in Scripture usage it is physical life that is thus designated, e.g. :

" To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life (R.V. margin, Heb. living soul) I have given every green herb for meat."—Gen. i. 30.

Job speaks of " The Lord . . . in whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind " (Job xiii. 10),

evidently in the former phrase referring to the dumb creation. And in New Testament it is even written of fish and of all the creatures of the deep that

" Every living soul died in the sea."—Rev. xvi. 3.

This portion of the Creation narrative therefore affords no support to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

It is equally true, however, that in Scripture ' soul ' is not always confined to the physical life, for that would always terminate with the life of the body. But in Matthew x. 28, ' soul ' is something which man cannot kill, but God can. While, therefore, this passage does not confine the soul life to the life of the body, equally certain is it that it rules out the indestructibility of the soul, and that by a categorical statement, viz. :

" Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." (Gk. Gehenna.)

Here is a plain implication that both body and soul of the wicked will be destroyed in Gehenna.

To this some may answer, ' If soul is not immortal, surely spirit is.' But to this claim precisely the same argument applies as is used in this chapter and throughout this book in establishing that the doctrine of the

immortality of the soul is foreign to Scripture. Equally with 'immortal soul' is the phrase 'immortal spirit' unknown to Scripture; equally of the human spirit as of the soul is the statement that it is deathless never made directly nor is its deathlessness to be necessarily inferred. Equally of 'spirit' as well as of 'soul' is it true that Scripture teaches its survival after death; but equally of spirit as well as of soul is it true that survival is not immortality (deathlessness). And what Scripture is found to establish as to the ultimate and final destiny of man must of course necessarily apply to every constituent of his being, whether spirit, soul or body; for in the resurrection, whether it be the resurrection unto life, or the resurrection unto judgment, man will be a unit, spirit soul and body reunited. This is acknowledged by all as being the teaching of Scripture.

Returning now to the Creation narrative, with more warrant of possible inference others have inferred the natural immortality of man from the statement of Genesis i. 26, that

"God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him."

It will be observed here that Scripture does not tell us wherein the creation of man in the image of God consisted. It leaves it undefined. Are we to interpret the certain by the uncertain in Scripture, or vice versa? Can we rightly draw an inference from these words which might be a possible meaning if they stood alone, but which, as we have already seen, would be in direct opposition to the Scripture statement that

"God only hath immortality"?

And, moreover, what right have we to assert that God in creating man in His own image gave him one particular attribute of Deity, unless God Himself tells us so in His Word? Why single out this attribute of deathlessness? We know that man's creation 'in the image of God' did not give him omniscience; it did not give

him omnipotence; it did not give him omnipresence; where then is the authority for asserting that it gave him deathlessness? Unless we can prove it from Scripture elsewhere, we must write against it 'unproven.' A possible inference is never proof.

Here the reader may feel a difficulty, and ask, 'But if Adam's having been created in the image of God does not mean immortality, what does it mean?' Now on such ground as this it behoves us to tread with tender care, and for two reasons; viz. (i) as we have seen, Scripture itself does not define for us wherein that image consisted; and the humble soul will remind himself that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God." If, therefore, this is not among "the things that are revealed," we shall be rash indeed to dogmatize. (ii) It is certainly worthy of notice that man's creation in the image of God is spoken of unfallen Adam, as he came from the hand of God (Gen. i. 17); yet, where the generations of Adam are recorded (Gen. v. 1), it is expressly written, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth" (v. 3), and this in immediate juxtaposition and evidently intended contrast to the statement repeated here afresh, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him, male and female created He them" (v. 1). It would therefore be rash to assert that the likeness of God in which Adam was created extended to his children, begotten in his fallen state, and to all his descendants since.

Among possible solutions that have been offered we might name the following: personality, power of dominion over the animal creation (see Gen. i. 28), moral nature, or even a measure of physical likeness. But it will be surely wiser to leave it where God has left it for us, at present undetermined.

Thus, then, the Scripture narrative of man's creation gives us no sufficient warrant for asserting his natural immortality. For after his sin God drove him from the garden, and "placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword which turned

every way, to keep the way of the tree of life,"¹ and the reason for this expulsion of Adam from Eden is stated by God Himself to be "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and *live for ever*."²

Hence we conclude that Adam was not an immortal being, but that eating of the tree of life would have maintained him in perpetual life.

The tree of life, thus denied in Eden to Adam, "lest he eat thereof and live for ever," reappears in the Book of Revelation. It is promised by Christ in His message to one of the Seven Churches in Asia as part of the portion of the overcomer,

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."—Rev. ii. 7.

And in the closing chapters of this book, which describe the new heavens and the new earth, the tree of life reappears. In that wondrous city, the new Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from God, is seen the river of life, issuing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of that city, and on either side of that river was there

"the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month ; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."—Rev. xxii. 2.

Thus the last chapter of the Bible reveals free access for the obedient to the tree of life, in divine contrast to the flaming sword of the Cherubim at Eden's gate, which turning every way barred the approach of disobedient Adam to the tree and its life-giving, life-sustaining food. Blessed indeed are they whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. xxi. 27), and who are privileged to share these glorious things. Life, life, life—is the ringing note of triumph on those eternal shores : life that abides, when death and the curse have passed away (Rev. xxi. 4 ; xxii. 3).

¹ Gen. iii. 24.

² Gen. v. 22.

Thus far we have considered Paul's inspired statement that "God only hath immortality"; we have seen also that the divine account of man's creation lends no authority to the belief that man is immortal in any constituent of his being. On the contrary, we find that God drove man out of Eden lest he should eat of the tree of life and live for ever; and we have found that the tree of life awaits him once more in the new heavens and new earth where death has ceased to be.

For the moment we will leave our Lord's teachings on life and life eternal¹ of which the fourth Gospel is so full, until we take up the subject of eternal life as the portion of the believer. But in the Synoptic Gospels we have one direct reference by our Lord to immortality, which for clearness and simplicity is unsurpassed in Scripture. When the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, sought to foil Him with a presumed difficulty concerning it, what was His reply?

"The sons of this world marry and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."—Luke xx. 34-36 (R.V.).

Here Jesus tells us that *only some* "are accounted worthy to attain that world," i.e. the world to come, and that having thus attained, "*neither can they die any more.*" Thus He leaves us with the inescapable double inference (i) that there will be others who will not be accounted worthy of life in the world to come, and (ii) that their portion will be to die a second time. Here then is our Lord Jesus in one brief sentence declaring by inference that a second death will be the portion of the impenitent, and stating explicitly that after the resurrection deathlessness (i.e. immortality) will be the reward of the blessed. And if our Lord for the moment speaks of the

¹ John iii. 15.

resurrection of the blessed as *the* resurrection, almost as if it were the only resurrection, it is of course because, as He Himself calls it elsewhere, it is "the resurrection unto life"¹ which He is speaking of, and as such is the only resurrection worthy of the name, as appears in the tender title by which Christ here designates the believing children of God, viz. 'sons of the resurrection.'

And similarly, Paul, when referring to eternal life as the goal which lies before the righteous, speaks of them as bent on the quest for immortality; whereas the wrath of God awaits the unrighteous, which here he depicts as a doom of awful suffering and retribution; though elsewhere, with no less clearness than his Lord, does he contrast that eternal life which is God's gift to man in Christ with that final death which is the wages of sin.² In the former passage he writes:—

"God . . . will render to every man according to his works: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."—Romans ii. 6–9.

The Greek word, here translated 'immortality' in our A.V., is rendered 'incorruption' in the R.V. It is a word worthy of careful study in its Scriptural use. The Greek is *aphtharsia*, literally 'imperishability'; and with its cognates *phthora*, *phthartos*, *aphthartos* (translated corruption, corruptible, incorruptible), throws no little light both on the nature and the destiny of mortal man. All four words are derived from the verb *phtheiro*, commonly translated 'to destroy,' the full and exact meaning of which is to deprive of life by slow processes of decay, attrition and disintegration, to wear out, to wear to destruction. Its literal and primary meaning is to cause physical decay, but so closely in the experience of man are moral and physical decay associated, that very naturally

¹ John v. 29.

² Rom. vi. 23.

and easily the word and its derivatives pass from the meaning of physical to that of moral decay, from physical to moral 'corruption.' Unfortunately in English, especially in religious literature, the words 'corruption,' 'corruptible,' more naturally suggest to us moral than physical corruption. It will be seen, however, from a full survey of the passages where these words are used that in nearly all the context demands the sense of physical rather than moral corruption: hence the translation of Dr. Weymouth, who generally gives it as 'perishable,' etc., is to be preferred to the 'corruptible,' etc., of the Revisers. Submitted below will be found all the New Testament passages in which the four words occur; and the translation here given, except where otherwise noted, is that of the A.V., any changes therein in the rendering of these four words being taken from Weymouth's 'New Testament in Modern Speech.'

"Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death and brought life and immortality (Gk. *aphtharsia*) to light through the Gospel."—2 Tim. i. 10.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively (R.V. living) hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance imperishable (Gk. *aphthartos*), undefiled and unfading, which has been reserved in heaven for you."—1 Peter i. 4.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with perishable (Gk. *phthartos*) things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ."—1 Peter i. 18.

"You have been born again by God's living and enduring word from a germ not of perishable, but of imperishable life. All mankind resemble the herbage, and all their beauty is like its flowers; the herbage dries up, and its flowers drop off; but the Word of the Lord remains for ever.¹ And that means the message which has been proclaimed among you in the Good News."—1 Peter i. 23, 24 (Weymouth).

¹ Quoted from Isaiah xl. 6-8.

IMMORTALITY—WHAT SAITH SCRIPTURE ? 51

Here Peter is contrasting the evanescence of human nature, perishable like the herbage and its swiftly decaying blossoms, with the imperishable life, implanted in the twice-born by the Word of God, which is indeed the living seed. From his natural birth man derives perishability ; from his supernatural birth imperishability. And in his second epistle Peter speaks of the ' exceeding great and precious promises ' given unto us,

" that by these ye might be (R.V. become) partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption (Gk. *phthoran*, physical decay) that is in the world through lust."—2 Peter i. 4.

Paul speaks of the same ' decay ' as produced by sowing to the flesh ; of the bondage of ' decay,' under which the natural creation groans ; and, like Peter, he contrasts the human and the divine as being respectively ' perishable ' and ' imperishable,' viz.

" He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption (Gk. *phthoran*, physical decay) ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—Gal. vi. 8.

" Because creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. . . . (Gk. *phthoras*, physical decay)."—Rom. viii. 21.

" Instead of worshipping the imperishable¹ God, they worshipped images resembling perishable² man, or resembling birds or beasts or reptiles."—Rom. i. 23 (Weymouth).

" They indeed (competitors in an athletic contest) do this for the sake of securing a perishable² wreath, but we for the sake of securing one that will not perish."¹—1 Cor. ix. 25 (Weymouth).

" Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish³ with the using)."—Col. ii. 22 (R.V.).

And this brings us to Paul's wonderful chapter on the resurrection, where he repeatedly contrasts the perish-

¹ Gk. *aphthartos*. ² Gk. *phthartos*. ³ Gk. *phthora*, ' decay.'

ability of this mortal frame with the immortality which we shall put on at the resurrection of the just. He writes :

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption¹; it is raised in incorruption²: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, The first Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. . . . Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption¹ inherit incorruption.² Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,³ and we shall be changed. For this corruptible⁴ must put on incorruption² and this mortal⁴ must put on immortality.⁶ But when this corruptible⁴ shall have put on incorruption,² and this mortal⁵ shall have put on immortality,⁶ then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”—I Cor. xv. 42-45, 50-54 (R.V.).

The divine source of our future immortality will be found further referred to in 2 Corinthians v. 1-5, Ephesians i. 14, Ephesians iv. 30, in which passages the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the earnest or seal of our final redemption, the redemption of our body, i.e. His divine presence within us is the pledge and guarantee of the immortality which we shall put on⁷ at Christ's appearing, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. And, again, Paul writes of our having the firstfruits of the Spirit, betokening that coming deliverance from the bondage of decay (Gk. *phthorās*), which creation itself is yearning for, and will share with us in that glad day of the mani-

¹ Gr. *phthora*, ‘decay.’

⁴ Gr. *phthartos*.

² Gk. *aphtharsia*.

⁵ Gk. *thnētos*.

⁷ Phil. iii. 20, 21.

³ Gr. *aphthartos*.

⁶ Gk. *athanasia*.

festation of the sons of God.¹ And if it be asked, who are these sons of God, we receive from the aged Apostle John the inspired definition that meets us on the threshold of his Gospel,

“To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name ; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God ” ;²

born from above, born to a heavenly citizenship, begotten anew by the imperishable seed of the Word of God to a living hope, the hope of immortality.

Glancing back over the Scriptures that we have thus reviewed, how marvellous is their harmony? and how inspiring the result? God, the sole possessor of immortality, offers anew to man in Christ the gift he had forfeited by sin. Born of corruptible seed, man ultimately perishes. Born again, of incorruptible seed, by the Word of God, born of the Spirit, he becomes heir of God and joint heir with Christ. And this word of the Lord, says Peter, which liveth and abideth for ever, “is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.”³ Verily with Paul we may repeat the triumphant cry,⁴

“Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.”

¹ Rom. viii. 18-23.

² 1 Peter i. 25.

³ John i. 12, 13.

⁴ 2 Tim. i. 10.

CHAPTER III

ETERNAL LIFE—THE BELIEVER'S PORTION

IN the preceding chapter we have sought the answer to the first of the two questions that are the subject of this book, viz. on what does the hope of man's immortality rest? And we have found that Scripture, so far from affirming that human kind is inherently immortal, teaches us that sinful man is a perishable creature, and centres our one hope of immortality in the Person of our crucified, risen, ascended, and returning Lord. Our Saviour Jesus Christ is Himself, as declared by His own lips, the Resurrection and the Life.

This brings us to our second question, viz. What are the final destinies respectively of the righteous and of the unrighteous, of the saved and of the lost? Confining ourselves first to the portion of the saved, and remembering that the righteousness that saves us is a righteousness not our own, but the righteousness of Christ,¹ the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe,² we answer in the familiar words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself:—

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—John iii. 16.

Everlasting life, life eternal,³ then, is the portion of the saved; and if words so natural and simple, so obvious in their meaning, need any definition, our Saviour Himself has given us His own definition elsewhere:—

“I am the living bread which came down from

¹ Rom. x. 4.

² Rom. iii. 22.

³ Matt. xxv. 46. (The same Greek word *aiōnios* is translated both ‘everlasting’ and ‘eternal.’)

heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."—John vi. 51.

But now, in the light of our previous chapter, arises the question, What is the difference, if any, between eternal life and immortality ? Are they to be distinguished, and if so, wherein ? The answer is very simple. When a soul believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and receives Him as his Saviour, he receives within him divine life ; through the imperishable seed of the Word of God he is begotten again¹ unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.² By accepting the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel, he has become a partaker of the divine nature,³ and being born of God, his seed remaineth in him.⁴ Thus he may be truly said to have eternal life here and now, as our Lord Himself teaches us :—

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."—John iii. 36.

But eternal life does not save us from the first death, the death which we have inherited as sons of the first Adam. We are born into this world mortal, and none of us will escape that penalty of Adam's disobedience, save those who are alive at our Lord's return, and who, ready to meet Him, are changed in a moment, these mortal bodies putting on immortality. Immortality therefore is a future prize, not a present possession, a prize to be put on at that glad resurrection morning, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life,⁵ when we, with those who now sleep in Jesus, will be caught up to be for ever with the Lord.⁶

It should not, however, be overlooked that eternal life is sometimes also spoken of as a future blessing, as Paul writes to the Christians at Rome :—

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."—Rom. vi. 22.

¹ 1 Peter i. 23.

⁴ 1 John iii. 9.

² *ibid.*, v. 3.

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 4.

³ 2 Peter i. 4.

⁶ 1 Thess. iv. 14-17.

This is perfectly natural, when it is remembered that these bodies of ours are still mortal, that eternal life, while it is our possession now in Christ, is a possession by faith, the indwelling Spirit of God being the earnest of our future inheritance.

But in this connection we have now a strange fact to note. Frequently in evangelical statements of belief we have eternal blessedness in place of eternal life stated to be the portion of the saved. A religious monthly lies before me, famous in the old country for its fearless exposure of Modernism and its defence of the faith. Yet in its 'Doctrinal Basis,' under the heading 'Fundamental Doctrines,' I find the seventh article reads as follows:—

"We believe in the resurrection of the body, both of the just and the unjust, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed in Christ," etc., etc.

And this, unhappily, could be duplicated again and again in America and in Canada, as well as here at home, among those who earnestly desire to stand for 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints.'

Eternal blessedness, not eternal life. Why this change? Why this turning aside from Scripture language, to put in its place a smaller, lesser thing? True, the greater includes the less: eternal life of course involves eternal blessedness, for it is life divine. But why the need for this watering down of Bible language? And where is the Scripture authority for so doing? And what will our beloved brethren reply if the Modernists turn upon them, as well they may, and demand of them an explanation of their inconsistency in attacking Modernism for departing from Scripture, when they themselves are found to be 'on the down grade' in this article of their faith, weakening and emasculating Scripture language, with no reason assigned for so doing?

For such a change there must be some reason. And we may conclude that it must be indeed a serious and impelling reason, when we find that similarly an unauthorized change is frequently made in evangelical

creeds when stating the doom of the lost. It is quite common to find that eternal punishment, if further defined, is not stated as in Scripture to be the second death, or everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, but is affirmed to be endless conscious suffering.

Again we ask, What is the cause that has led men who reverence Scripture, and who desire to base all their teachings upon it, thus nevertheless to change Scripture language, in relation alike to the portion of the believer in Christ, and to the doom of the lost? We can well believe that only an unsuspected hidden cause could have entrapped godly men and able men thus to play false with their own much-loved principle of loyalty to God's Word written.

In our opening chapter we wrote that there is a cause discoverable and indeed discovered for this unconscious misinterpretation of Scripture, a cause recognized and deplored by not a few leading theologians of the past, a deep-seated cause, scarcely dreamed of by the Christian public generally. What is it? It is that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which at the first was nothing more than the pious hope and guess of a pagan philosopher, early found its way unauthorized into the Christian Church, and has for some centuries past come to be regarded almost as an axiom of the Christian Faith.

But before offering the evidence that this doctrine of the natural or inherent immortality of all human souls is indeed a false intruder from without, there is one other ground on which that doctrine is advocated which we have not yet noticed, and which should be dealt with first. Granting that the narrative of creation affords no ground in support of this doctrine, some have endeavoured to supply the lack of Scripture evidence, positive or inferential, for this belief by arguing that as we find in man everywhere an almost universal, indeed a wellnigh instinctive expectation of life after death, this proves that such a hope will be realized. His Creator would not have made him thus, it is argued, only to disappoint the hope that He Himself must have implanted. To this

argument, drawn confessedly from natural reason, not from revelation, there is a twofold sufficient answer, viz.

(i) Survival after death is not deathlessness. Now, were the expectation of survival sufficient to prove the fact of survival, which of course it is not, even so it would not prove deathlessness. To prove this it must establish that man, having passed through the first death, and then later having been raised to judgment, can never die again a second time, whereas Scripture states that all raised at the second or general resurrection, whose names are not found written in the Lamb's book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire, and that this is the second death.

(ii) It is just this instinctive longing for immortality which God, who implanted it, has met in the Gospel. He has offered it to man in and through Jesus Christ our Saviour, and conditioned it upon faith in Him.

The reader may find it at first difficult to believe that so tremendous a doctrine as the natural immortality of man could have crept unbidden into the Christian faith, or to regard it as possible that a doctrine which from our childhood we have taken for granted as being part of the A B C of the Christian religion can turn out after all to have been an error. For such, therefore, we give the testimonies of men whose names and opinions will carry weight. Let us hear them first on the presence or absence of this doctrine in Scripture.

“The immortality of the soul is neither argued nor affirmed in the Old Testament.”—*Bishop Perowne*.

“The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the name, are alike unknown to the entire Bible.”—*Olshausen*.

“In fact, no such doctrine is revealed to us.” “The wicked are never spoken of as being *kept alive*, but as forfeiting life.”—*Archbishop Whately*.

“Eternal fixity and duration belong only to those who are in accordance with God.”—*Dean Alford*.

“Christianity treats man not as immortal, but as a candidate for immortality.”—*Dr. Parker*.

"With St. Paul for our guide we shall not readily be persuaded to accept the idea that the *gospel* has propounded to us the natural immortality of all human souls as a portion of the Christian religion."—*W. E. Gladstone*.

"Life to the godless must be the beginning of destruction, since nothing but God and that which pleases Him can permanently exist."—*Dr. Thomson, Archbishop of York*.

"Hope in death can only spring from the principle of Immortality, and this principle *has no root* save in Christ."—*Principal Tulloch*.

"All teaching which makes the soul immortal by virtue of a primitive essence is concealed pantheism."—*Professor E. Naville*.

The grave danger of allowing such a pagan philosophic guess to creep into Christianity is urged by Gladstone in an utterance worthy of our close attention. He wrote as follows :—

"Another consideration of the highest importance is that the natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of an ingeniously sustained, but gravely and formidably contested, philosophical opinion. And surely there is nothing, as to which we ought to be more on our guard, than the entrance into the precincts of Christian doctrine, either without authority, or by an abuse of authority, of philosophical speculations disguised as truths of Divine Revelation. They bring with them a grave restraint on mental liberty; but what is worse is that their basis is a pretension essentially false, and productive by rational retribution of other falsehoods." *W. E. Gladstone* ('Studies of Butler').

Let us now endeavour to trace the gradual acceptance of this tenet of Platonism in the Christian Church.

Dr. A. W. Brown, of Union Seminary, New York, thus writes :—

“ From Israel came the doctrines of the Resurrection, and of the Advent ; from Greece the doctrine of natural immortality ; from Jesus the new content which Christianity has put into both.” And in a footnote he explains ‘ natural immortality ’ thus :

“ The doctrine that the soul or spirit is a simple substance and is therefore imperishable. We have traced the rise of this doctrine in Plato and his successors. We have noted its influence upon Alexandrine Judaism, but it is not found in our Bible, either in Old or New Testament. Like other elements in later speculative theology, it enters Christianity by way of Alexandria. Origen teaches it in its original Greek form, including the doctrine of pre-existence on the one hand and of reincarnation on the other. It is true that in Origen’s teaching this reincarnation does not take place in the present world. He holds that there is to be a succession of worlds, in each of which the spirit will continue the process of training begun here, until at last, perfectly purified from sin, it will leave matter behind, and enter its final form of existence as pure spirit. The later Church rejected this doctrine of a series of lives in successive worlds. In like manner it rejected the doctrine of pre-existence, confining immortality to the life that follows death. Finally, it extended immortality to all souls, the good and the evil alike, whereas in Greek thought immortality is confined to the good.”—*Dr. A. W. Brown* (“ The Christian Hope,” p. 110).

And Gladstone, writing in the “ North American Review ” of March and April, 1896, told the same story of its introduction, with added later details. Speaking of the mental freedom of the first centuries of the Christian faith, he says :—

“ The secret of this mental freedom, the condition which made it possible, was the absence from the scene

ETERNAL LIFE—THE BELIEVER'S PORTION 61

of any doctrine of a natural immortality inherent in the soul. Absent, it may be termed, for all practical purposes, until the third century ; for, though it was taught by Tertullian in connection with the Platonic ideas, it was not given forth as belonging to the doctrine of Christ or His apostles. . . . It seems to me as if it were from the time of Origen that we are to regard the idea of natural, as opposed to Christian immortality, as beginning to gain a firm foothold in the Christian Church. . . . The opinion for which he is now most generally known to have been finally condemned is Restorationism or Universalism, an opinion which harmonizes with and perhaps presupposes the natural immortality of the soul. But the idea of restoration was only one amidst a crowd of his notions, all of which had the natural immortality of the soul for their common ground."

And after dealing with causes necessary to account for "the wholesale change which has taken place in the mind of Christendom with regard to the spirit of natural immortality," Gladstone continues :—

"It would be difficult, I think, to name any other subject connected with religious belief (though not properly belonging to it) on which we can point to so sweeping and absolute a revolution of opinion ; from the period before Origen, when the idea of an immortality properly natural was almost unknown, to the centuries of the later Middle Ages, and of the modern age, when, at least in the West, it had become practically undisputed and universal. . . . The doctrine of natural as distinguished from Christian immortality had not been subject to the severe tests of wide publicity and resolute controversy, but had crept into the Church by a back door as it were, by a silent though effective process, and was in course of obtaining a title by tacit prescription.¹ The evidence of the change

¹ This is not a contradiction of what Gladstone had written in his "Studies of Butler" quoted above, when he spoke of it as an ingeniously

may perhaps be most readily supplied to us by observing that when arguments are offered for the immortality of the soul they are rarely derived from Scripture."

It is well known that it was the earnest advocacy by Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (A.D. 354-430), of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and of its logical consequent, the doctrine of eternal torment in hell fire, that won wide acceptance for both these theories in the Christian Church. What, however, has not been sufficiently considered is how far Augustine, and fathers of the earlier centuries also, brought with them into Christianity the speculations of Greek philosophy which they had learnt in the schools in their pre-Christian days. Augustine, writing as a Christian, confessed that the Platonic writings "enkindled in his mind an incredible ardour," and though they did not satisfy him, failing to give him victory over sin and temptation, yet he tells us that he studied the Bible, "wishing to find in it those truths which he had already made himself acquainted with from the Platonic philosophy, but presented in a different form." In his early works (one of which was 'On the Immortality of the Soul'), written after his conversion, he was still engaged upon philosophic problems, and "in all these treatises is apparent the influence of the Neo-Platonic methods of thought which for him, as for so many others, had become the bridge to the Christian."¹

The influence of Augustine's writings on subsequent Christian thought and teaching has been immense. And in regard to the doctrine of natural immortality, Gladstone follows the historian Flügge in his belief that "all along the Latin Church led the way in this development," whereby the doctrine gained entrance into the Christian Church. And this was but natural, seeing that he was

sustained, but gravely and formidably contested philosophical opinion; for he is speaking there rather of its discussion among pagan philosophers than of its acceptance among Christian thinkers and writers.

¹ Article on Augustine, in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," by Gustav. Kruger, Prof. of Church History, University of Giessen.

commonly regarded as the greatest of the four pre-eminent fathers of the Latin Church. Certain at all events it is that an unmistakable pronouncement of its inclusion in the Articles of the Christian faith comes from the Roman Church. In the year 1513, in a Bull of Pope Leo X, purporting to be issued with the assent of a Lateran Council (which, however, has been questioned), we have the following words :—

“*Damnamus et reprobamus omnes asserentes animam intellectivam mortalem esse.*” (We do condemn and reprobate all who assert that the intellectual soul is mortal.)

Consequently Luther, in his Defence, published seven years later, included the immortality of the soul among

“all those monstrous opinions to be found in the Roman dunghill of decretals.”

No less emphatic in repudiating it as unscriptural was William Tyndale, the early English reformer and translator of the Bible. And it is worthy of note that three Articles on Eschatological points of doctrine were expunged in the reign of Queen Elizabeth from the Forty-two put forth under Edward VI; thus leaving it at least an open question in the Church of England from that time.

In the light of the above, it should be impossible to repeat the assertion, too often confidently made, that the twin doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost have been held universally (or with practical universality) within the whole Christian Church from the beginning. We do not need to go outside Scripture to learn Christian truth, but this assertion having been made, we subjoin in an Appendix¹ quotations from the Fathers of the first two centuries, revealing that their view of the teaching of Scripture on these subjects was in the main the same as has been deduced from Scripture in this book.

But in this discovery that the doctrine of natural im-

¹ See Appendix A.

mortality is a pagan intruder, which has unhappily won its way into acceptance as a tenet of the Christian Faith, we have found a cause, and a sufficient cause, explaining how it has come to pass that the final destinies of the good and the evil, instead of being stated as in Scripture language to be 'eternal life' and 'the second death' respectively, are declared in most popular evangelical statements of belief to be respectively eternal blessedness and endless conscious suffering. It will be seen at once that if the Bible is read with this a priori assumption of the natural immortality of all men present to the mind, Bible language must be interpreted in compliance therewith. If it be true that all men, good and bad, saved and unsaved, live for ever, then obviously eternal life, being the reward of one class only, cannot bear its simple natural meaning of living for ever. Eternal life must be interpreted to mean something else. So also if man in some constituent of his being is immortal, then clearly death must mean something else than death; and thus the second death has come to be interpreted as meaning endless life in conscious suffering, and eternal punishment has been understood to mean endless punishing. And this presumed Christian axiom will of course affect the interpretation of all Scripture language that touches the question. In later chapters we shall see that the words 'destroy,' 'perish,' 'destruction,' 'perdition,' when used of the doom of the lost, have been similarly deprived of their natural meaning; and that Christ's illustrations of that doom under the figure of capital punishment have been also voided of their natural meaning.

Having now seen that this a priori assumption of man's natural immortality must be abandoned, let us return to Scripture to read it in its simple obvious meaning. And it will be to the fourth Gospel that we naturally turn to find the fullest teaching of our Lord on this theme of life eternal. Here from end to end we find Christ revealing Himself as the Life and the Life-giver to those who receive Him. Indeed, so full is this Gospel of teaching on the subject that we would earnestly recommend the reader

who is seeking light on this subject to lay down for the present this book, and divesting himself or herself so far as possible of all preconceived opinions on the subject, to read through the Gospel of John again and again and yet again. Then let every passage referring to life be underlined,¹ and finally let the underscored passages be studied and restudied till the student has found out at the feet of the Divine Master the key which renders all harmonious, and by its own self-evidencing power gives the assurance that he has rightly interpreted the will of God herein. Then he will be able to say whether his conclusions, independently reached, are or are not the same as those deduced by the writer from the same Scriptures.

For lack of space we must perforce confine ourselves here to four of the leading passages in which Jesus handles the subject of eternal life. But these four we give with their immediate context in full, both that they may appear in the original setting of their respective narratives, and lest omissions might in the minds of readers raise the suspicion of special pleading and of unfairness in handling the Word of God. We cannot do amiss to let our Saviour's teaching speak in all its fulness, its inspired accuracy, and its original depth of simplicity and power. May He who spoke the Word Himself unfold to us by His Spirit its true and full meaning until our hearts burn within us.

“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do : for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth : and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

¹ Thus underlined, or heavily typed, as in the passages given below, it at once catches the eye that the thought of life and death is the key to the whole.

For as the Father **raiseth up the dead**, and **quickeneth**¹ *them*; even so the Son **quickeneth** whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment² unto the Son. That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath **everlasting life**, and shall not come into condemnation,² but is passed from **death** unto **life**, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the **dead** shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall **live**. For as the Father hath **life in Himself**, so hath He given to the Son to have **life in Himself**; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment² also, because He is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto **the resurrection of life**; and they that have done evil, unto **the resurrection of damnation**."²—John v. 18–29.

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have **eternal life**; and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.”—John v. 39, 40.

“Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which **perisheth**, but for that meat which endureth unto **everlasting life**, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

¹ The Greek word here for ‘quickeneth’ is the same as in 1 Cor. xv. 45: The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening (R.V. life-giving) Spirit. ‘Quick’ and ‘quickening’ are old English for ‘living’ and ‘life-giving.’

² In each of these cases the word in the Greek is the same, *krisis*, judgment.

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. They said therefore unto Him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth **life** unto the world. Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am **the bread of life**: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen Me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me: and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should **raise it up again** at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have **everlasting life**: and **I will raise him up** at the last day. The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and **I will raise him up** at the last day. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that be-

lieveth on Me hath **everlasting life**. I am that **bread of life**. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and **are dead**. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and **not die**. I am **the living bread** which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall **live for ever** : and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the **life** of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat ? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, **ye have no life in you**. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath **eternal life** ; and **I will raise him up** at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As **the living Father** hath sent Me, and **I live by the Father** ; so he that eateth Me, even **he shall live by Me**. This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and **are dead** : he that eateth of this bread shall **live for ever**. These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying ; who can hear it ? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you ? *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before ? It is the Spirit that **quickeneth**¹ ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are **life**.”—John vi. 26-63.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall **never see death**. Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is **dead**, and the prophets ; and thou sayest, If a man keep My saying, he shall **never taste of death**.” —John viii. 51, 52.

“ Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was

¹ See note 1, p. 66.

coming, went and met Him : but Mary sat *still* in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not **died**. But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* Thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall **rise again**. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall **rise again** in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection and the life** : he that believeth in Me, though he were **dead**, yet shall he **live** : And whosoever **liveth** and believeth in Me shall **never die**. Believest thou this ? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord : I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."—John xi. 20–27.

The first of these passages is introduced to us with the record that Jesus had aroused the murderous fury of His Jewish critics by claiming for Himself equality with Godhead. So far from withdrawing the claim He repeats it, and it consists in this, that the Father has given to the Son that inherent life which is the prerogative and attribute of Godhead (v. 26). This life-giving power of Deity the Son uses for the raising of man from the dead. And while this is true of life in the spiritual sphere, wherein living men dead in trespasses and sins are called into newness of life by the voice of the Son of God (v. 25), so that safe from judgment they have already passed from a state of spiritual death to a state of present spiritual life (v. 24) ; so also does our Lord claim for Himself the same life-giving power in the realm of the physical (v. 23), and declares that His voice will one day call from their graves the dead, the righteous dead to a resurrection of life, the wicked dead to a resurrection of doom. Here, then, so far from our Lord giving the remotest suggestion that all men, wicked and righteous alike, are already possessors of inherent immortality, by the striking antithesis between the resurrection of life for the righteous and of doom for the wicked, He leaves us to the natural if not indeed the inevitable inference

that the first resurrection is to a life which will die no more, a life eternal, while the latter resurrection is to a doom of which life is the opposite.

In the second passage quoted Christ unfolds Himself as the Bread of Life, in the hearing of those whose eager interest had been aroused by participating in His miraculous feeding of the five thousand. The passage might be entitled 'the Source and Sustainer of Life Eternal.' To review it briefly :—

Jesus tells them that the meat He gives is imperishable (v. 27). He is the true bread from heaven (v. 32), the life-giver (v. 33), the bread of life ; the believer in Him shall hunger and thirst no more (v. 35). Not one will be lost of those given Him by the Father ; all He will raise to life again (v. 39). This giving and restoring of life to man by the Son is the Father's plan ; the initiative is the Father's (vv. 37, 39, 40). The life He gives begins now and includes resurrection. This life comes through faith in Him, and whereas the Israelites who fed on the heaven-sent manna died (v. 49), they who feed on the bread of life will not die (v. 50), but will live for ever (v. 51). He who feeds on Me, says Jesus, has eternal life now, and I will raise him to life again at the last day (v. 54). And this last fact He emphasises by a four-fold repetition (vv. 39, 40, 44, 54). He continues, Except ye feed on Me, ye have no life-principle within (v. 53, R.V.). As the Father is the source and sustainer of My life, so am I the source and sustainer of a life that is eternal (vv. 57, 58), not like that of the fathers who ate manna and died (v. 58).

Let us endeavour now to place ourselves among those who first heard these words, and who, on the day following the miracle, had sought Him who fed their weary and hungry bodies in the wilderness by a divinely multiplied supply of the common food of daily life. Christ warns them against toiling for the bread that cannot last, and in contrast points them to Himself as the bread of life eternal. They, desiring a sign in confirmation of this amazing claim, remind Him of the manna as the token

of the divine mission of their great lawgiver. Thereupon Christ twice points out that the manna had failed to give their fathers anything more than sustenance for the bodily life. They were long since dead ; whereas the bread He gave would give to its partaker a life eternal, so that he would not die, but live for ever. This life would be a present possession, commencing now, and would carry with it the privilege of being raised at the last day by Christ Himself from death to a life which should die no more.

Now is it not evident that the contrast that Christ is setting before these Jews is that of a bread from heaven which could not and did not save their fathers from death, the death with which they were familiar ; whereas the true bread from heaven would both give and sustain a life that would never die ; a life eternal, that has within it the promise and the certainty of immortality ? If there is one thing that Christ insists on throughout, it is that the manna did not give eternal life, whereas the bread of life does. " Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

And precisely the same claim is that which Jesus makes in the next passage above quoted (ch. viii. 52, 53), which claim again infuriated His Jewish listeners. Christ, so far from minimising that claim, replied to their indignant question,¹ " Hast thou seen Abraham ? " in the majestic words, " Before Abraham was, I am,"² words whose meaning they instantly and rightly recognized to declare that the speaker was Himself the self-existent, ever-present Jehovah. Jesus of Nazareth—they knew it and He knew it—is herein declaring Himself to be the divine and only source of a life which is eternal. And this eternal life is only for those members of a dying race who receive Him and feed on Him the living bread that came down from heaven ; as He had said above, " Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves " (ch. vi. 53, R.V.).

¹ ch. viii. 57.

² v. 58.

But here the believer in the immortality of all human souls will interpose the objection, Christ speaks of His own as living for ever, and not dying. Whereas they did die and do die the death of the body. Does not this prove that the death He is speaking of is not physical death at all, but spiritual death, a condition of alienation from God, and that the eternal life of which He speaks is fellowship with God, as declared by Himself in ch. xvii. 2, a life which never can die and never will? We reply, most certainly the life eternal of which Jesus speaks and which commences on earth here and now by feeding upon Him is a life of union with God that involves immortality. But the question at issue is, 'Is this eternal life the portion of believers only, and does it carry with it the privilege of being raised again after death to a life that can die no more?' Is it inclusive of immortality, or is immortality the natural endowment of all men given to them from the first as a natural attribute of the human soul, and never revoked by the Divine Giver? That the former is true and not the latter has surely been established by Christ's own words recorded in Luke xx. 35, 36, and given also above. Also it is clearly implied in His calling the first resurrection 'the resurrection of life'; and if this be so, we must seek another explanation of the fact that our Lord speaks not infrequently as if His own would never die at all. The explanation is not far to seek, and is conveyed to us by His own language. Does not our Saviour of set purpose and with very significant meaning speak of the body of those He was about to raise as having fallen asleep? "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." And had not the great apostle truly caught his Master's vision when he too refused to speak of the bodily death of a Christian as aught but sleep? "Even so them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." "We shall not all sleep." Why this treating of the death of a Christian as if it were scarce death at all? Why for any other than the sufficient reason that while the Christian's body is laid in the grave, his spirit departs to be with Christ?

And whereas that body lies in the unconsciousness of death till the last trump, then it will be called back to life by Christ and will live to die no more, having put on a body like unto His glorious body, a fit tenement wherein to dwell with Him for ever.

It is in striking analogy with this that in the case of the wicked the death of the body is sometimes left out of count, so that the "second death," the final and awful doom of the sinner, is spoken of almost as if it were the only death, 'the death that counts,' as we should say, 'the real and final death.' Paul writes :—

"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death."¹ And he adds, "the wages of sin is death."²

And James writes similarly :—

"Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."³

Now the death of the body cannot thus be correctly spoken of, for it is not universally the fruit of the wages of sin of the individual. Rather is it the heritage of a sinful race received from their first father. It is undoubtedly the final death which the apostle holds up to view, which is indeed the supreme, the ultimate death penalty of man. And such we may well believe was the death the Saviour had in mind when He said to the self-blinded Pharisees, "Ye shall die in your sins."

A similar and equally remarkable analogy is found in the fact that Christ and His apostles not infrequently speak of the blessed resurrection as if it were the only one.¹ How is this? Is not the explanation again to be found in Christ's own language? When He is speaking of both in juxtaposition, He calls the first 'the resurrection of life,' and the second 'the resurrection of judgment.' One is unto life and immortality; the other is unto the doom of 'the second death.' Thus the two resurrections themselves, the gateways of eternal destiny

¹ Rom. vi. 21.

² Rom. v. 23.

³ James i. 15.

of the human race, one for the saved, the other for the lost, bear upon their very portals the titles of awful contrast, LIFE and DEATH. Is it any wonder then that often the former, being the only resurrection unto life, was felt to be the only resurrection worthy of the name, being a restoration to life which is life indeed? And here it is worthy of notice that in the first of the above passages quoted from the Gospel of St. John life and judgment are repeatedly placed in antithesis, a fact more obvious in the Greek than in the English, for the same Greek word, *krisis*, judgment, occurring four times, is twice translated 'judgment' (vv. 22, 27), once 'condemnation' (v. 24), and once 'damnation' (v. 27). The very antithesis itself suggests strongly that the resurrection unto judgment is a resurrection not to life but to its opposite.

We now come to the story of the raising of Lazarus and to the conversation of Jesus with Martha, who meets Him at the confines of the village with the touching cry, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (ch. xi. 21). And she follows this up with the daring venture of faith, "But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee" (v. 22.) Martha shrinks from putting her full meaning into words. She means, "Thou canst bring him back to life even now." Jesus knows her meaning, but He puts her off to a more distant day, "Thy brother shall rise again" (v. 23). 'I know it,' replies Martha, 'but that is future,' and her heart silently whispers, 'I want him back again now!' To the faith and love of her yearning heart the Master gives the great revelation of Himself, "Martha, I am Myself the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on Me, even though he die, shall live; and everyone that liveth and believeth on Me shall assuredly not die for ever." (Such is the literal meaning of the original, and see R.V.) And Jesus adding, "Believest thou this?" draws from Martha the triumphant all-embracing response, "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

ETERNAL LIFE—THE BELIEVER'S PORTION 75

Thus, then, through all these passages from John's Gospel we have our Saviour's teaching clear and emphatic (a keynote to John's Epistles as well as to his Gospel), that the believer's portion is eternal life now, and a resurrection unto eternal life hereafter.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE AND DEATH IN SCRIPTURE

WE have seen in the previous chapter that the portion of the saved in the words of our Divine Master is Eternal Life, and that He Himself defined this for us as 'Living for ever.' In contrast to this we saw, however, that in popular creeds these simple terms have been often changed to 'Eternal blessedness'; and that this change has come about at the behest of a purely gratuitous assumption, not found in the Bible, but derived from the pagan philosopher Plato.

Perhaps the tabulation of these facts will the more clearly bring home to the reader the seriousness both of the change itself and of its cause. In tabled form, it may be presented thus:—

FINAL DESTINIES.

OF THE SAVED.	OF THE LOST.
SCRIPTURE.	
Life.	Death.
Eternal Life.	The Second Death.
Living for ever.	Eternal Punishment.
	Everlasting Destruction
	from the presence of the
	Lord.
CREEDS.	
Eternal blessedness.	Eternal conscious suffering.
i.e.	i.e.
Eternal life in bliss.	Eternal life in torment.

Why this serious change from Scripture in the creeds? The answer is plain. Because acceptance of the presumed axiom of the immortality of the soul has compelled Scripture to be thus interpreted in a non-natural sense, so that eternal life becomes the final destiny both of the saved and of the lost, the one in bliss, and the other in torment.

There is, however, a further plea in defence of this change given to the meaning of the terms 'life' and 'death.' It is that 'life' and 'death' in Scripture, when not spoken of the body, have spiritual meanings. It is argued that the death threatened to Adam must have a spiritual meaning, because God had declared that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit he would die, whereas we know that he did not die a bodily death on the day that he sinned. Hence are inferred spiritual meanings of life and death, viz. union with or separation from God.

It will be wise and necessary, therefore, in the light of this claim, that we should return to the divine revelation given us in Genesis of the entry of death into the world, and from there onwards study the Scriptural usage and content of the terms 'life' and 'death.' And when the record meets us of death threatened to man in Eden, as the penalty of disobedience to his God, we ask, What was the death threatened, and what was the death incurred?

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."—Gen. ii 16, 17.

These words raise the question, Did God mean that death would immediately follow upon disobedience? And if He did, why did it not immediately follow? Or was there a sense in which death did immediately follow? The answer is to be sought in the narrative itself. Now the serpent suggestively said, "God doth know that in the day ye

eat thereof, then shall your eyes be opened"; and, as a matter of fact, their eyes were opened as soon as they sinned. Hence it would seem difficult to avoid the conclusion that the penalty attached by God involved immediate death. We ask then—What were the consequences which the narrative sets before us as immediately following? They are threefold, viz. :—

1. Man came at once under the condemnation of death. Hence the sense of shame and fear immediately exhibited by Adam and Eve. Legally, they were under sentence of death already.
2. Man at once was out of touch with God. They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God—token of spiritual alienation from God.
3. Man came at once into the sphere of death. Presumably till then Adam and Eve had been feeding on the tree of life, for God had said to Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." We do not know for certain whether their life was maintained by eating the fruit of that tree, though we may with reason presume so; but we do know that after their sin they were shut out of Eden, lest they should eat of that tree, and eating should live for ever. And we know also that our life to-day is a constant battle with death, the powers of life and death contending for the mastery in this our mortal frame.

But it is equally obvious from the narrative that this was not the whole of the penalty, either threatened or incurred. Whether the death of the body be in mind as the penalty of sin, or the death of body, soul, and spirit, or eternal torment, it is equally true of all three propositions that the full penalty was not inflicted then. God said to Adam, "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return," but Adam did not return to dust at once, else there could have been no further probation, no probation of grace, to reveal to him, however dimly, what grace had planned before the foundation of the world. God's

purpose of grace, in full foreknowledge of the misuse Adam would make of his free will, preceded man's creation—the Father's love, the Son's willing sacrifice—all was determined before Adam came into being, for the Lamb was "slain from the foundation of the world." And the precious fact faces us, that in the dark hour of man's fall our gracious tender God, "the God of all grace," uttered the first redemptive promise,¹ in enigma indeed, but there in Eden, before He pronounced the doom and the curse for the transgression that had been wrought.

We return to the question then, in what sense did Adam die in the day that he sinned? We answer, in the light of the narrative, he entered at once *into the sphere of death*, legally, spiritually, physically.

1. Legally. He came under condemnation of death.
2. Spiritually. He became alienated from God.
3. Physically. He became a dying man.

And all his posterity are born under this condition, in this sphere of death.

Now, therefore, we are able to understand the meaning of the New Testament language which speaks of a death in which the unregenerate are now living, and which we are wont to call 'spiritual death.' True, it is alienation from God, but it is more. It is a legal and a physical condition, as well as a spiritual. And as with Adam, so with unregenerate man; this 'death' is a portion of the penalty threatened and incurred, but it is not yet the penalty completed. Man lives under sentence of death, man lives in the sphere of death, man lives subject to the power of death; but during his mortal life the full sentence is not yet executed.

With this key then from Genesis iii. let us consider the New Testament passages which speak of a present condition of death in which the natural man lives during this present life on earth. It will be observed that the sense of legal condemnation or of spiritual alienation from

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

God predominates according to the context, whether it is the judicial or spiritual aspect of man's condition that is under consideration; also that the physical sense, now mortal and hence soon to die, comes very near to the common figurative use in which we speak of a man near to or in certain danger of death as if he were already dead. This is the well-known figure of speech called by grammarians 'prolepsis,' or the use of a word in an anticipatory sense, and is found in the Old Testament, as in the cry of the frightened Egyptians, "We be all dead men,"¹ or in the solemn threat of God to Abimelech, "Thou art but a dead man,"² unless he at once restored to Abraham his wife. To give New Testament instances of the two categories under which the unregenerate are spoken of as spiritually dead, the following may be noted, it being observed that the legal sense very naturally and imperceptibly shades into the spiritual, e.g.

Legally, under condemnation of death.

"He that believeth not is condemned already."—John iii. 18.

"I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."—Rom. vii. 9.

"Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me."—Rom. vii. 11.

"Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good."—Rom. vii. 13.

Paul's own commentary on the above is that elsewhere he calls the decalogue, "the ministration of death."³

Spiritually, out of touch with God.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."—1 John iii. 14.

"The mind of the flesh is death."—Rom. viii. 6.

"You did He quicken, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins."—Eph. ii. 1. (R.V.)

"God . . . even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ."—Eph. ii. 5 (R.V.).

¹ Exod. xii. 33.

² Gen. xx. 3.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 7.

In these last two passages, where it will be noted the R.V. has the more correct translation, not 'dead in trespasses and sins,' but 'dead through your trespasses and sins,' the remarkable word 'quicken'¹ is a creative word, and suggests the thought, God brought you by a creative act² out of the sphere of a living death, in which your sins had placed you, into a sphere of new life,³ the sphere of freedom from the law of sin and death, the sphere of walking with God and pleasing Him, the sphere which has the promise and the possession of endless life, life in and with God now, immortality hereafter.

There are two passages in Romans vii. and viii. in which the physical and the spiritual seem closely intertwined, viz. :—

"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
(R.V. this body of death.).—Rom. vii. 24.

"The body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."—Rom. viii. 10.

The body is physically mortal, with death in prospect; and because of its sin, it has a spiritual downdrag which the Spirit within overcomes by His life-giving power.

"Let the dead bury their dead."—Matt. viii. 22.

"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."—1 Tim. v. 6.

In these last two passages we might paraphrase the word 'dead' somewhat more generally as dead to all things holy, dead to higher things, without any life Christwards and Godwards—dead in the same sense in which we are bidden to reckon ourselves "dead unto sin, but alive unto God." And here we may note the significant and instructive fact that as the present condition of death of the unregenerate falls into three categories, legal, spiritual, physical (the last-named being anticipatory), so also the present condition of life which we have here and now in Christ Jesus falls into the same three categories :—

¹ Gk. *ezōpoiēse*, gave life to, made alive.

² Cf. 2 Cor. v. 17 (R.V.).

³ Cf. Rom. vi. 4.

1. Legal. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."—Rom. viii. 1.
2. Spiritual. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."—1 John i. 3.
3. Physical. Not only is the Spirit within an earnest and a pledge of immortality, but He is also the quickener of our physical life now in the service of God. Paul recognized the life of Christ within him as quickening his physical frame and sustaining his physical life to bear up against and triumph over the sufferings and the exhaustion consequent upon his faithful heroic service. For he spoke of himself as "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."—2 Cor. iv. 10. See also v. 11.

Thus, whether it be death or life, both are present in life on earth now; the unregenerate are living in the sphere of death, the regenerate in the sphere of life; but for both the full fruition, the full manifestation of death and life, tarries till this earthly probation is passed.

It is perhaps well to observe here that the phrases "spiritually dead," "spiritual death," are not scriptural ones, and should be used with great care. When pressed literally, the result comes dangerously near to teaching that unregenerate man is, so to speak, a moral and spiritual corpse in this life, unable to move hand or foot toward the things of God, unable even to lift any desire Godwards, unless first quickened by the Spirit. While it is perfectly true that the natural man can do nothing nor make the slightest move towards earning the favour or the life of God, yet this interpretation of "spiritually dead" would seem to overpress the natural meaning of death, and we argue this for three reasons, viz. :—

1. God Himself does not treat unregenerate man so. Just as, through Moses, He bade the stricken

Israelite, bitten by the fiery serpent, to look and live, showing that the power to look was still with him, so does our God always treat His fallen creature man on the ground that he is still able to respond to the gracious call. When Jesus cried, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," He expected His hearers to be able to hear and come.

2. The Gospel preacher to-day does the same. He does not treat the unsaved as immobile moral and spiritual corpses. He preaches the words of life, and if he be a true messenger of God, he expects them to hear and live. Unregenerate man is still a moral being, he hears the gracious word, the Spirit gently pleads, the man has the power to respond or refuse. His will is his 'ego,' it is his own still, unless indeed he be insane. The pressure of the Spirit's pleadings is not physical but moral. The Holy Spirit does not inject life into a corpse that it may hear and live, and living may respond to God's call; but He gently pleads with, reasons with, appeals to the man "dead through his trespasses and sins," and the man repenting, i.e. turning his mind and heart Godward, listens; his will surrenders to the Word of Truth, and he lives.

It is thus undoubtedly true that union with God carries with it life; also that sin causes separation from God, and separation from God entails death, a present death in the legal sense of being now under condemnation of death, a present death in the spiritual sense of being now out of touch with God, a present death (proleptically) in the physical sense of being now mortal and bound to die sooner or later; but all these present meanings have not exhausted the content of the word death; for its full fruition remains to take place, first in the death of the body, and finally for the unsaved in the second death.

But to endeavour to define life and death as always meaning union and separation is going beyond the mark.

Yet the following have been confidently offered as definitions, viz. :—

Life physical is union of soul and body.

Life spiritual is union with God.

Life eternal is eternal union with God.

And conversely,

Death physical is separation of soul and body.

Death spiritual is separation from God.

Death eternal is eternal separation from God.

A little consideration of the above will show that the two words ' union ' and ' separation ' cannot be successfully offered as definitions of the words ' life ' and ' death ' ; for the union and separation spoken of lie in two wholly different spheres. In the physical sphere it is union or separation of two different constituents of man's own being that produces life or death. In the spiritual and eternal spheres it is union of man with God or separation of man from God that produces life or death. Hence, manifestly, the single words union or separation cannot be used to replace the words life or death, without the necessary qualifying words being added, according as the sphere spoken of is physical or spiritual.

And yet the claim has actually been made, for a well-known writer in a leading American religious magazine did not hesitate recently to declare that

“ Death always means separation, as can easily be seen by substituting the latter word for the former wherever it occurs.”¹

We are quite willing to abide by the test, for it is a perfectly just one. Indeed, it will be remembered that this is one of the principles which we enumerated in our first chapter as necessary for sound interpretation of scriptural or, indeed, of all human language, viz. that if a definition be offered for the meaning of a word, its correctness can

¹ C. C. Cook, in the “ Sunday School Times,” March 20, 1920.

always be tested by substituting the definition for the word, and observing whether or not it makes sense.

Now let our readers take any passage of Scripture where the words 'death,' 'dead,' 'to die,' occur, and in their place let them substitute, as proposed above on behalf of these definitions, the words 'separation,' 'separated,' 'to be separated,' and they will at once find how inadequate are these terms alone, without the necessary qualifications added, to convey an intelligible meaning. Take such a passage, for example, as the first ten verses of the sixth chapter of Romans, and note the result :—

What shall we say then ? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound ? God forbid. How shall we that are separated to sin, live any longer therein ? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His separation ? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into separation, that like as Christ was raised up from the separated ones by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His separation, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is separated is freed from sin. Now if we be separated with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him : knowing that Christ being raised from the separated is no more separated ; separation hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He was separated, He was separated unto sin once : but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.

But perhaps the reader will say, You ought also at the same time to have substituted union, etc., for life. Let us, therefore, rewrite two of the last three verses, making this further substitution on behalf of the definition given :—

Now if we be separated with Christ, we believe that we shall be also united with Him. . . . For in that He was separated, He was separated unto sin once : but in that He is united, He is united unto God.

We feel almost as if an apology were due to our readers for putting before them such a travesty of Scripture as this ! But be it remembered, it was proposed by a writer in defence of his own definition and we have taken him at his word, with the result that his claim must be abandoned, that " death always means separation, as can be easily seen by substituting the latter word for the former wherever it occurs." But it will not be amiss if hereby it becomes patent to our readers that the substitution of Eternal Torment for the Second Death as the penalty of the unsaved must be in a poor case indeed, if for its maintenance it has to depend on such definitions as this !

And yet again, in the same magazine but earlier, a thoughtful critic presented the question which appears to the writer unanswerable, and which received no answer.

If life always means union, what is the union referred to when the word is on the lips of the Almighty Himself ? e.g. " As I live, saith the Lord " (Isa. xlix. 18) ; or as in Deuteronomy xxxii. 40, " I lift up my hand to Heaven, and say, I live for ever."

It will be granted, we believe, from a consideration of the above, that while life and death in various senses imply and involve union and separation of various kinds, yet these words alone are wholly inadequate, without added explanation, to express what life and death are, and hence cannot be accepted as definitions of their true meaning. The fault in these attempted definitions is that they would withhold or becloud the real primary meaning of each, the radical idea which underlies and precedes every secondary and figurative meaning. It is a grave question whether such elementary terms as life and death can be adequately defined. No definition has yet been discovered wholly satisfactory. We know

what life is, but how to define it we know not. The one thing that is certain is that life and death are contraries, and in Scripture as in all language death always means loss of life, forfeiture of life, a condition in which the functions of life are no longer in exercise. If life physical is spoken of, physical death is a condition in which the exercise of the functions of life physical has ceased. Is it life spiritual? Spiritual death is a condition in which the exercise of the functions of spiritual life has ceased. And it will be found to be equally true, whatever sphere is being spoken of, that death is always the contrary of life in that sphere.

But what, we ask again, is the penalty incurred by personal transgression? Death in what sense? We think all are agreed that Adam's posterity are born in a sphere of death. They are born under the curse; they are born alien from God, they are born mortal. Death physical is to all of us an inherited liability, a forfeiture under which we have come into the world. Certain forms of crime earn capital punishment. But it is not true that the whole of mankind suffer physical death as the penalty of personal transgression. For infants die and idiots, though they know not the difference between right and wrong. As Paul says, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."¹ The penalty of personal transgression, unrepented of, unconfessed and unforgiven, is spoken of in the New Testament as the second death. What then is this second death? Is it death of body and soul in the lake of fire? Or is it conscious life in endless torment in the lake of fire? Does it or does it not mean a final forfeiture of life?

And here, before we deal with teachings of our Lord on hell, whether explicit or illustrative, or with other Scriptures concerning it, and confining ourselves at present to the terms life and death, and their Scripture usage in relation to the final destiny of the saved and of the lost, we shall find that we still have three, if not four,

¹ Rom. v. 14.

lines of converging evidence which constrain us to believe that the second death, the penalty for personal sin, means final forfeiture of life. We have (i) the direct Old Testament evidence by way of type, analogy, and legal enactment. We have (ii) a possible argument from the silence of the Old Testament. And the two remaining are, the supreme emphasis laid on 'life' in Old Testament and New Testament alike as the reward of the righteous, and its intimate relation to salvation, and the frequent scriptural antithesis between life and its opposite, to describe the alternative issues of final destiny that God sets before man for his choice.

(i) Does the Old Testament then throw any light on this question, by type, analogy, direct statement, or otherwise? We reply, the Old Testament throws light on this subject, first, by the analogy and type of sacrifice. On the very threshold of Eden we read: "Unto Adam also and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them."¹ Whence these skins? The common interpretation seems almost unavoidable that God thus early instituted sacrifice. Still more certain is the deduction from the acceptability of Abel's offering to God and the rejection of Cain's that God had commanded sacrifice. "By faith Abel offered."² What is faith but obedience to the revealed will of God, to the will of God spoken or written? From this point onwards, as we know, God-appointed, God-accepted sacrifice runs right through the record up to Calvary, type of the death penalty incurred by actual transgression. The sacrifice of an animal victim, the forfeiture of its life by the outpouring of its blood, was the divinely appointed symbol alike of the death which man incurred by personal transgression, of the life which he had forfeited, and of the life which his Redeemer must lay down, if atonement would be made for him by another. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission,"³ is the divine principle of sacrifice, declaring as explicitly as words can declare it, that the death penalty for transgression is the forfeiture of life.

¹ Gen. iii. 21.

² Heb. xv. 4.

³ Heb. ix. 22.

The yielding of its physical life by the victim was the divinely appointed type and analogy of the death incurred by sin.¹

The Old Testament throws further light on this matter by the fact that the Mosaic law set before Israel the alternative, 'life and good, and death and evil.'²

The curse of the law brought death. And that the penalty of disobedience was not only death physical but also death ultimate is clear from our Saviour's answer to the young man who came to Him with the question, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus replied :—

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—Matt. xix. 17.

And again, when a lawyer asked Him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life," the Lord asked him "What is written in the Law. How readest thou?" And when the lawyer quoted in reply the all-inclusive command of the law, embracing perfect love to God and man, Jesus answered him :—

"This do, and thou shalt live."—Luke x. 28.

Obedience to the law meant life eternal; disobedience meant final death.

"The soul that sinneth it shall die."—Ezek. xviii. 20.

"The wages of sin is death."—Rom. vi. 23.

Is it possible to escape the conclusion that whereas the first death, the death of the body, is the penalty for our being sons of Adam, the penalty for personal transgression, recognized alike in Old Testament and New Testament, under law and under grace, is the death of body and soul, the second and final death? Said our Saviour :—

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell."—Matt. x. 28.

¹ Rom. v. 14.

² Deut. xxx. 15.

If the first death is forfeiture of the life of the body, the second death is forfeiture of the life both of body and soul. Is not this a truer simpler analogy than that which presents the first death as a separation of soul from the body, and the second death as being an eternal separation between man and God ?

The Old Testament abounds in references to death as the end of the wicked ; but with most of these it is impossible to claim with certainty that they refer to the second death, because under the Old Covenant with His own people Israel, and to the heathen around who were without a written revelation, God's dealings were mainly in the outward and temporary sphere. Hence, remembering our principle of sound interpretation that possible inference is never proof, we must allow these to pass, as possibly, and perhaps in most cases probably, referring to the first death rather than the second. Two passages, however, there are in the Old Testament, in which it is difficult to avoid the inference that it is the ultimate and final death of the whole man, the second death, which is here spoken of, viz. :—

“There will be no reward to the evil man ; the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.”—Prov. xxiv. 20 (R.V.).

Here it would seem that the revisers were afraid to give the word translated “reward” its true meaning, for they attach to it a marginal note, see chap. xxiii. 18, and referring to this we find the translation to be :—

“Surely there is a reward ; and thy hope shall not be cut off.”

And again to the word “reward,” there is a marginal note as follows “or, sequel, or future, Heb. latter end.” Reading these into chapter xxiv. 20, “There will be no future to the evil man ; the lamp of the wicked shall be put out,” it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that the future life is spoken of, lamp commonly signifying life in Scripture. If this be so, this passage speaks of extinction of life hereafter.

The following also suggests by its context that it is the final judgment which is in view :—

“ The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner (marg. or perhaps, like gnats) ; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Fear ye not the reproach of men . . . for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool ; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation unto all generations.”—Isa. li. 6, 7 (R.V.).

(ii) And here, with reserve and caution, recognizing that arguments from silence are not to be pressed as certainties, we would offer for the reader's consideration the suggestion that the silence of the Old Testament tells strongly in favour of ultimate extinction of life rather than of perpetual preservation in suffering. It is acknowledged that continually throughout the Old Testament death is presented as the doom of the sinner. Now if God has seen fit in the childhood of the race to give only a partial revelation, in the sphere mainly of the outward, earthly, and temporal, it is both intelligible and reasonable that under such conditions He may have withheld from man a clear and positive revelation of his final destiny after resurrection, if for the wicked that destiny was a final and a second death of which the first was a partial representation. On the other hand, if the final doom awaiting the impenitent really were his preservation in perpetual existence in an appalling condition of suffering, is it conceivable that a just and holy God, knowing this, would have for centuries not only withheld from man this knowledge, but would meanwhile have spoken to him only of that death with which he was acquainted ? Would not this have been rather misleading him than giving him a partial revelation ?

(iii) That this is a true understanding of Scripture is further doubly enforced, alike by the scriptural antitheses that set before us life and its contrary as the supreme

alternative for our final destiny, and also by the constant emphasis given in Scripture to LIFE as being the final goal of man's hope and man's endeavour. If Paul speaks of the wages of sin as death, instantly he gives us its antithesis, "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And this antithesis is given us in a variety of language, and with such frequency and reiteration that, not to weary the reader, we will refrain from giving the full quotations, but herewith subjoin a table for his thoughtful study. Following this we give a list of Scriptures laying emphasis on Life as the goal of the righteous.

SCRIPTURE'S ANTITHESSES.

Life. Death.	Life. Corruption.
John v. 24 ; vi. 49-51, 58. Rom. v. 17, 21 ; vi. 21-23. Rom. vii. 9, 10 ; viii. 2, 13. 2 Cor. ii. 16.	Gal. vi. 8.
Life. Perish.	Life. Punishment.
John iii. 16 ; vi. 27.	Matt. xxv. 46.
Life. Destroy.	Life. Gehenna.
John x. 10.	Matt. ix. 43, 45.
Life. Destruction.	Save. Perish.
Matt. vii. 13, 14.	1 Cor. i. 18 ; 2 Cor. ii. 15.
Life. Judgment.	Salvation. Perdition.
John v. 29.	Phil. i. 28 ; Heb. x. 39.
Life. Condemnation.	Save. Destroy.
John v. 24.	Luke ix. 56 ; James iv. 12.
	Salvation. Destruction.
	(of spirit) (of flesh)
	1 Cor. v. 5.

LIFE IN SCRIPTURE.

The way to life.	To see life.
Matt. vii. 14.	John iii. 36.
To enter into life.	Living water.
Matt. xviii. 8, 9.	John iv. 10 ; vii. 38.
His life a ransom.	Resurrection of life.
Matt. xx. 28.	John v. 29.
In Him was life.	Bread of life.
John i. 4.	John vi. 48.

Words of life.	The promise of life.
John vi. 63 ; Acts v. 20.	2 Tim. i. 1.
The light of life.	Life brought to light.
John viii. 12.	2 Tim. i. 10.
I am . . . the Life.	The hope of eternal life.
John xi. 25 ; xiv. 6.	Titus i. 2.
The ways of life.	The power of an endless life.
Acts ii. 28.	Heb. vii. 16.
The Prince of life.	The crown of life.
Acts iii. 15.	James i. 12 ; Rev. ii. 10.
Repentance unto life.	A living hope.
Acts xi. 18.	1 Peter i. 3 (R.V.).
To reign in life.	The grace of life.
Rom. v. 17.	1 Peter iii. 7.
Justification of life.	I am . . . the Living One.
Rom. v. 18.	Rev. i. 17 (R.V.).
Newness of life.	The tree of life.
Rom. vi. 4.	Rev. ii. 7 ; xxii. 2, 14.
The spirit of life.	The book of life.
Rom. viii. 2, 10 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6.	Rev. iii. 5 ; xx. 12, 15.
The word of life.	The Lamb's book of life.
Phil. ii. 16 ; 1 John i. 1.	Rev. xiii. 8.
Christ our life.	A river of water of life.
Col. iii. 4.	Rev. xxii. 1, 17.

This prominence given to Life and its contraries in the New Testament receives added emphasis when it is known that in the Syriac New Testament, which was not only a very early version but was also very closely akin to, indeed practically the same as, the colloquial Aramaic of Palestine spoken by our Lord and His contemporaries, the words Saviour, save, salvation, when spoken (as generally) of man's salvation from sin and his consequent eternal destiny, invariably appear as Life-giver, to give life, and life.

Thus all our hope of the future, the prize of immortality, the present and future enjoyment by us of eternal life, all centre in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is written :—

“In Him was Life, and the Life was the light of men.”
—John i. 4.

“As the Father hath Life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have Life in Himself.”—John v. 26.

“He that hath the Son hath the Life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the Life.”—1 John v. 12 (R.V.).

CHAPTER V

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED— OUR LORD'S TEACHINGS ON 'HELL'

THUS far we have dealt with the scriptural ground for man's hope of immortality ; and have also seen from Scripture that the believer's portion here and hereafter is eternal life, and that this life is in Christ, who is Himself the Life, and the Life-giver. In the preceding chapter we studied the Scripture content of the terms Life and Death, and we found that, whatever else they may include, they bear in this connection their simple primary meanings, in which death always connotes the forfeiture of life.

We come now to deal more particularly with Scripture affirmations regarding the ultimate doom and destiny of the lost. We shall naturally commence with our Lord's teachings on the subject, and these are so full that it will be well to subdivide them, taking first our Lord's direct references to 'hell.'

For the English reader there is here at the outset an unfortunate cause of confusion in the fact that in our A.V. three different Greek words, viz. Gehenna, Hades, and Tartarus, have each been translated by the same English word 'hell,' although each bears a perfectly distinctive meaning.

Gehenna (Heb. Ge-hinnom) was the Vale of Hinnom just outside Jerusalem, also called Tophet. It had been the scene of Moloch worship in the days of Solomon, Ahaz, and Manasseh. Josiah therefore polluted it, and thenceforward it was the place where the offal of the city was burnt, and where the corpses of criminals were thrown to lie unburied. By the Jews of our Lord's day *hē Geenna*

ton puros, 'fiery Gehenna,' had become a synonym for the place of the final punishment of the wicked.

Hades, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Sheol, the underworld or place of darkness, is, in Scripture use, the place or condition of the dead between death and resurrection.

Tartarus (a familiar name in classic mythology) is once named by Peter as the prison where the fallen angels are kept, waiting the day of judgment.

It will be seen, therefore, that of these three Greek terms translated 'hell,' only the word Gehenna refers directly to our present subject. (To make the treatment exhaustive, however, we give in an appendix¹ the ten Scripture passages which speak of Hades, and the only single reference to Tartarus.)

Our Lord's allusions to Gehenna are found in six different passages (two recorded in two of the gospels), and the word appears only once elsewhere in the New Testament, viz. James iii. 6. These passages we give below in full, that they may be read in their entirety before any comment is offered upon them. The words will thus be able first to speak for themselves.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."—Matt. v. 21, 22.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body

¹ See Appendix B.

should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.”—Matt. v. 27-30.

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”—Matt. x. 28.

“And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear : Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him.”—Luke xii. 4, 5.

“Woe unto the world because of offences ! for it must needs be that offences come ; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh ! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee : it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee : it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”—Matt. xviii. 7-9.

“And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched : where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched : where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out : it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire : where their worm dieth not,

and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it ? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."—Mark ix. 42–50.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ?"—Matt. xxiii. 15, 33.

"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity : so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature ; and it is set on fire of hell."—James iii. 6.

A perusal of the above passages makes it at once evident that our Lord, in speaking of fiery Gehenna, has in mind not the actual valley of Hinnom, but that of which Gehenna had become a symbol to the Jews of His day, the fiery doom of the finally impenitent.

On the first passage (Matt. v. 22) the comment of Dean Alford will be found helpful and illuminating as to the figures employed by our Lord. He writes : " There were among the Jews three well-known degrees of guilt, coming respectively under the cognizance of the local and supreme courts, and after these is set *hē Geenna tou puros* (lit. the Gehenna of fire), the end of the malefactor, whose corpse, thrown out into the valley of Hinnom, was devoured by the worm or the flame. . . . The most important thing to keep in mind is that there is no distinction of kind between these punishments, only of degree. In the thing compared, the *krisis* (judgment) inflicted death by the sword, the *sunedrion* (council) death by stoning, and the disgrace of the *Geenna tou puros* (Gehenna of fire) followed as an intensification of the horrors of death ; but the punishment is one and the same, death ! "

In the second passage quoted above (Matt. v. 29, 30) the parallelism certainly suggests that the perishing of an

eye or hand is far preferable to the perishing of the whole body, which would result from its being cast into Gehenna.

And this possibility is strongly endorsed by the next reference (Matt. x. 28), where our Lord speaks of the destruction of both body and soul in Gehenna. Now the destruction of the body is a thing intelligible to us all ; it has but one meaning ; and in this very context it is used as parallel if not indeed synonymous with the killing of the body. And further, if we had no preconception to hinder our taking the words in their simple and obvious sense, we should naturally infer (1) that whereas man has not the power to ' kill the soul,' our Lord intends us to understand that God has that power, and (2) that as the killing of the body is its destruction, so also to destroy the soul is to kill the soul. But here comes in the unproved axiom of the indestructibility of the soul and the essential immortality of human nature. If this be accepted as a premiss, then of course a secondary meaning must be found for the word ' destroy ' when used of the soul, a meaning compatible with its indestructibility. Hence the believer in the endless-conscious-torment theory argues that destruction of the soul, of which Scripture speaks, means not its dissolution, but its moral ruin, its separation from God. A little further on we will set before the reader an exhaustive survey of the use of the word ' destroy ' in the New Testament, or rather of its Greek equivalent *apollumi*, which in the middle voice is rendered in our English Testament ' to perish,' ' to be lost,' with its cognate *apōleia*, translated ' destruction ' or ' perdition.' Meanwhile for light on our Lord's meaning in the passages given above, where it will be observed that the word appears in its translation of both ' destroy ' and ' perish,' it should be sufficient if we can discover that our Lord Himself gives us the key to His meaning by His use of this word. This indeed He does, and moreover the key He gives is corroborated by His apostles Peter and Paul, each of whom gives us a self-interpreting passage, which should set our minds finally at rest as to what their meaning is when they use the terms ' destroy,' ' perish,'

and 'be lost,' of the destiny of the impenitent, whether by it they understand final dissolution, or an endless conscious existence in torment.

The key which our Lord Himself gives us will be found in His reply to those who told Him "of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." Jesus answered them :—

"Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you Nay, but except ye repent, *ye shall all likewise perish.*"—Luke xiii. 3.

Now it is surely obvious that our Lord did not mean, "If you, my questioners, fail to repent, a like terrible fate at the hands of Pilate or of some other oppressor awaits you." Such a meaning would no more occur to His hearers than it does to us, and when our Lord continued :—

"Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that these were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay, but except ye repent, *ye shall all likewise perish*" (*ibid.* v. 5),

it is as clear to us who read His words as it must have been to those who heard them that He did not mean, 'If you, my Jewish hearers, fail to repent, a similar awful accident will befall you.' What then did He mean? What else but this—'If you die unrepentant, a doom awaits you as sudden, as complete, as fatal as theirs.' The 'perishing' which our Lord speaks of as the final doom of the impenitent, He Himself interprets for us to be *similar in kind* (of degree He says nothing here) to the earthly fate of the unhappy sufferers named, a fate swift, tragic, fatal, complete. If the doom of the impenitent really be to be kept alive for ever in endless conscious torment, where does the congruity appear in the two occurrences which our Lord used to illustrate that doom? Our Lord's language in that case would be misleading indeed.

Equally plain and self-interpreting is the key which Peter gives us to his meaning of the word 'destruction,' when he uses it of the doom of the lost. When Simon Magus offered him money that he might receive the power of communicating the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, Peter consigned his money and himself to a common doom in the words :—

"Thy money *perish with thee*" (Acts viii. 20),

an exact translation of the Greek being, "May thy money be for destruction with thee." The doom that his money was to share with him was destruction.

The word 'destruction' in its obvious and literal meaning is applicable with equally good sense alike to the money and the person of Simon Magus. As soon, however, as we insist on a derived and secondary or spiritual meaning for 'destruction' when applied to the doom of Simon, it ceases to be applicable to his money.

And if any additional evidence were needed to supply overwhelmingly conclusive proof that the Scriptural meaning of *apollumi*, when applied to the doom of the wicked, is not continued life in misery, not moral and spiritual ruin, but ultimate dissolution, we have it in the words of the Apostle Paul, which from the nature of the context leave no possible doubt as to his meaning. In his great chapter on the resurrection, he is arguing that if there be no resurrection, then is Christ not risen, and, he tells the Corinthian Christians, "if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins," and adds :—

"Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (Gk. *apōlonto*).—1 Cor. xv. 18.

Now, it is obvious that the words 'are perished' cannot bear the meaning which the eternal torment theory attributes to *apollumi* in this connection. For the 'lake of fire' is a post-resurrection judgment; and here the question at stake is, 'What if there be no resurrection?'

That Paul meant, 'Those that have fallen asleep in Christ will suffer the torments of the lake of fire,' or, 'will suffer spiritual and moral ruin,' would never occur to us, nor even to our orthodox brother himself. What we naturally understand the apostle to mean, and what his Corinthian converts must likewise have understood him to mean is, 'if there be no resurrection, then those who are fallen asleep in Christ *are no more*.'

It is further worthy of notice that the Greek tense in the word translated 'are perished,' 'are no more' is the aorist, *apōlonto*, denoting not a present condition, but a crisis in past time, lit. 'they perished,' the grammatical sense thus strongly confirming our interpretation.

We return now to our Lord's employment of the term Gehenna as signifying the doom of the lost. The next of these utterances is recorded in two gospels, viz. in Matthew xviii. 7, 9, and somewhat more fully in Mark ix. 42-50. Both records should be studied with scrupulous care, for they supply one of the most relied-on arguments in favour of the belief that endless life in torment is the ultimate fate of the impenitent. Now the first thing that presents itself as noteworthy is that in both these passages the reward of the righteous as contrasted with the doom of Gehenna is spoken of as *entering into life*. This would naturally convey the idea, were there no antecedent preconception to bar the simple and obvious inference, that Gehenna provides a punishment of which life is the contrary: The contrary to 'life' is 'death,' and these two opposites are constantly set before us in Scripture as the contrasted goal of the saved and the lost.

Next, we observe that our Lord speaks of Gehenna as 'the eternal fire,' *to pur to aiōnion*, and as 'the unquenchable fire,' *to pur asbeston*, as the place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." And Scripture gives us its own inspired interpretation of what *pur aiōnion* means, for Jude describing the judgment that overtook Sodom and Gomorrha speaks of it as *pur aiōnion*, telling us that they "and the cities about them . . . giving themselves over to fornication . . . are set forth

as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”—Jude 7. A reference to the context will show that Jude is denouncing false teachers who were immoral, and he is warning his readers of the certainty of their doom, and enforces his warning by illustrations of judgment overtaking the rebellious. He tells us that the fate of the Sodomites affords a divinely intended warning. Now it is impossible fairly to interpret this of the doom which is awaiting the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrha in the lake of fire, or of present suffering in Hades, for Jude is speaking of a visible infliction which constitutes a terrible example. This would be equally inapplicable to present suffering unseen by us, or to a future doom. The original words, ‘are set forth for an example,’ are striking and emphatic: the Greek words are *prokeintai deigma*, ‘lie before us as an illustration.’ Jude is referring, of course, to the Old Testament record of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrha by the fire and brimstone rained on them from heaven; and this is manifest, not alone from the words themselves, but from the fact that two of the other illustrations named by Jude as giving the same warning are likewise of historic judgments recorded in the Old Testament, viz. the fate of the Israelites who died in the wilderness, and of Korah who with his companions was swallowed up by earthquake. The words of Jude are closely paralleled by Peter in his second epistle:—

“God turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly” (2 Pet. ii. 4, 6),

and lest any might think he is warning sinners of a similar physical judgment likely to overtake them in this world, he adds, “The Lord knoweth how . . . to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”¹ What does Jude mean by the vengeance of eternal fire, when he names it to describe the judgment that overtook the cities of the plain and their guilty inhabitants?

¹ 2 Peter ii. 9.

Does he mean a fire that is for ever burning its indestructible victims? If we visit the sites of Sodom and Gomorrha, shall we find the *pur aiōnion* still feeding on its victims? Nay, indeed! the waters of the Dead Sea flow silently over the sites of the cities whose citizens perished in those awful flames. The eternal fire of which Jude speaks is a fire eternal *not in its process, but in its results*. Here then we find we have the Scripture key interpreting to us the divine meaning of this tremendous phrase 'eternal fire.' The Holy Spirit, who spake through the lips of Christ and inspired the writings of Jude, Himself interprets Scripture for us by Scripture, and sets His own divine seal upon its meaning for all who will listen to Him.

In St. Mark's Gospel the equivalent phrase (chap. ix. 43) is *to pur asbeston*, 'the unquenchable fire,' incorrectly translated in our A.V. 'that shall never be quenched.' And for this phrase again we have an inspired interpretation in the words of John the Baptist, who speaks of the coming One as one who

"will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."—Matt. iii. 12 (R.V.).

If there is one material more swiftly consumed than another by fire, it is chaff. John emphatically declares it will be burnt *up*; and we instantly understand what he means by unquenchable fire. He means a blaze which nothing can extinguish till its work is done. The chaff burnt up, the fire of course ceases for lack of material to feed on. Thus, the example of the chaff, as aptly and unmistakably as that of Sodom and Gomorrha, signifies the total destruction and disappearance of the thing consumed. And the *pur aiōnion* and *asbeston* which does this obliterating work, is the description the Saviour gives of the fires in Gehenna, which will destroy the wicked, body and soul!

Equally clear is the conclusion to be drawn from the awe-inspiring words, "where their worm dieth not, and

the fire is not quenched,"¹ when we turn to the Old Testament passage from which our Lord takes them. They will be found in the closing prophecy of Isaiah (chap. lxvi. 23, 24), where the prophet is speaking of the millennial day in which all nations shall gather to Jerusalem to worship, after the Lord has destroyed the armies that attack the holy city. The words are thus given in the R.V. :—

“ And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh.”

The picture is plain. The bodies of the slain lie outside Jerusalem unburied, rotting as they lie, or slowly burning amid heaps of city refuse, a sight horrible to the beholder, and speaking of the righteous judgment of the wrath of God. But is it not obvious that the worm and the fire are both agents of destruction, preying upon the bodies of the slain ? As Dean Alford says in his comment on Matthew v. 22, quoted above in reference to Gehenna, ‘ the malefactor’s corpse thrown out into the valley of Himmon *was devoured* by the worm or the flame.’

Now manifestly the undying worm and the quenchless flame feed upon their victims until the whole is consumed. As with the fires that consumed Sodom and Gomorrha, as with the blaze that burns up the chaff, so here also in this illustration, the work of the worm and the fire are eternal, not in their duration, but in their result ; and if this be the undoubted meaning of the illustration which our Saviour employed, where would be the congruity of the figure, if He intended us to understand by the worm and the fire that which the common interpretation places on them, viz. the ceaseless and eternal gnawings of conscience and memory preying on the spirits of the lost, as

¹ Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. (R.V. omits the two former verses.)

they writhe in the lake of fire? The figure conveys the picture of a slow revolting end to a corpse flung out upon a refuse heap, an awful warning to all beholders, a slow end, but an end, a dissolution, a disintegration with a final disappearance. To conform to the type thus chosen by our Lord Himself, what can the doom of the lost be otherwise than a process which ends in dissolution? The eternity of which Scripture speaks lies in the eternity not of its duration, but of its result :—

Our God is a consuming fire.¹

There remain but two references by our Lord, given in the gospels, and one by James in his epistle, to complete the occasions in which the term Gehenna is used in the New Testament. These are such as to afford no further light on the nature or extent of the punishment involved. But they serve to confirm the conclusion that the Valley of Hinnom had become a recognized symbol of the place of punishment awaiting the wicked dead. "A Son of Gehenna" (R.V. margin), "the judgment of Gehenna," "the tongue set on fire by Gehenna," all these signify that the fires of the Valley of Tophet which destroyed the refuse of Jerusalem have an awful counterpart in the life beyond. And when we think of Hell, the place of final doom, as distinct from Hades, the intermediate state between death and resurrection, it is well that we should have before our eyes, as our Lord's hearers had, the Valley of Hinnom as an illustration. Gehenna was a place of death, aggravated by accompanying horrors. How different this from the popular conception of hell as a place where the wicked dead live on for ever and for ever, in ceaseless irrevocable torment, their agony heightened by the consciousness that there is never to be for them either release from or relaxation of the suffering, whether that suffering be physical or mental or spiritual, or a combination of all three.

The foregoing chapter will, we trust, have settled the question for every open-minded student that our Lord's own references to Gehenna, so far from justifying this

¹ Heb. xii. 29.

terrible popular conception, lead us to the entirely opposite conclusion. Alike by the symbols He uses and the language He employs in relation thereto, He would have us understand that the final punishment of the impenitent issues in death.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED : OUR LORD'S TEACHINGS (*cont.*), EVERLASTING FIRE, EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT, Etc.

IN the preceding chapter we have examined every passage naming Gehenna as the scene of the doom of the wicked dead, every instance but one being from the lips of our Lord Himself, and our conclusion, alike from the symbol He used, and from His language surrounding it, was that our Lord would have us understand that the doom of the wicked issues in death both of body and of soul.

In two of these passages our Lord speaks of the fire of Gehenna as being 'eternal fire,' *pur aiōnion*, and by reference to Jude 7 we have found that the inspired interpretation of *pur aiōnion*, as evidenced by the fate of Sodom and Gomorrhah, is that the fire of Gehenna is eternal, not in its process, but in its result.

This brings us at once to the other passages in which our Lord speaks of the punishment of the wicked as being eternal. These are three in number, and are as follows :

Matt. xxv. 41, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Matt. xxv. 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal."

Mark iii. 29, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."

In each of these, the Greek word for 'everlasting,' 'eternal,' is *aiōnios*.

Now, if our interpretation of *pur aiōnion*, "everlasting fire," is right, and it appears to be the only one possible in reference to the fiery overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrha, we may expect to find further corroborative light thrown on the question by an exhaustive analysis of the scriptural use of the Greek word *aiōnios*. The adjective *aiōnios* is derived from the noun *aiōn*, an age, an era; the word leaving the time limit of the age undefined.

In the writer's theological studies at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, the late Rev. Handley C. G. Moule, then Principal, afterwards Bishop of Durham, whose reputation as a biblical scholar and a devotional teacher is deservedly world-wide, laid it down with distinctness that the term of duration expressed by *aiōnios* must be sought, not in the word itself, but in the noun to which it is attached. It is therefore difficult to find an English equivalent for *aiōnios*, 'age long' being the nearest literal rendering. Hence the only sure way of determining its scriptural meaning is to study exhaustively its use in Scripture. And we may expect to find that the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, which, be it remembered, was the version in common use among the Jews of our Lord's day, will throw helpful light on its use in the writings of the New Testament. With Bishop Moule's dictum then to guide us, let us classify its uses in LXX and the New Testament by the nouns to which it is attached. The subjoined table will be found, it is believed, to supply its general uses in LXX, while that of its New Testament use covers every single case where the word occurs. The Hebrew word 'olam' is represented in LXX by the adjective *aiōnios* or by phrases containing the noun *aiōn*, and has a wide latitude of renderings in our English Bible, 'everlasting,' 'perpetual,' 'of old,' 'for ever,' 'ancient,' etc. In our English New Testament *aiōnios* is translated 'eternal' or 'everlasting.' The correctness of the translation can be quickly tested by noting that of which it is spoken :—

AIŌNIOS

- LXX uses. (1) Of that which is Divine.
 (a) God Himself, e.g. Gen. xxi. 33, "The everlasting God."
 (b) His attributes, e.g. Ps. c. 5, "His mercy is everlasting."
 (c) His kingdom, e.g. Dan. iv. 3, "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."
 (d) Spiritual experiences, e.g. Isa. xxxv. 10, "Everlasting joy upon your heads."

One typical instance is given in each of the above cases ; these uses are frequent ; and it will be readily admitted that as the person or thing spoken of is divine, here *aiōnios* will have its most extensive meaning, and is correctly translated "everlasting."

- (2) Of objects earthly, and divine dealings dispensational.

e.g. the rainbow covenant.—Gen. ix. 16.

the mountains.—Hab. iii. 6.

the Aaronic priesthood.—Exod. xi. 15.

the statute of atonement day.—Lev. xvi. 34.

Israel's possession of Caanan.—Gen. xvii. 8.

Of the above it will be at once apparent that the first two can only last as long as earth itself remains. When the earth and heavens pass away, dissolved by fire, rainbow and mountains alike will pass. In the new heavens and new earth God Himself declares, "Behold, I make all things new."¹ Similarly, Mosaic statutes and Aaronic priesthood belonged to a passing dispensation, and while Israel's possession of the promised land is yet to be restored to her, and that will be her home when Christ takes His seat upon the throne of David, yet again the limit of her possession of it will be the day when this earth passes, to give way to that great Eternity when God shall be all in all. Thus then the word *aiōnios* stands in these and similar passages rather for 'lasting to its

¹ Rev. xxi. 5.

limit,' to the limit of its own proper age or era, than for 'everlasting' in the full and unrestricted sense.

(3) Of the doom of the wicked.—Dan. xii. 2.

This is the well-known passage, which gives the clearest revelation vouchsafed to any Old Testament saint or prophet of a resurrection, and that a twofold resurrection, one to life and one to judgment.

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

Now it is sometimes claimed that everlasting contempt involves the continued conscious existence of those who experience the contempt felt for them. But let it be noted that the epithet 'everlasting' is not applied to the word 'shame,' in which case at first sight it might seem to involve the conscious existence of those who feel the shame. Moreover, the word 'contempt' is rendered in the margin of the R.V. 'abhorrence,' and it will be found to be the same Hebrew word (*deraon*) which in Isaiah lxvi. 24, is spoken of the corpses of the slain that lay unburied, "they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." The concordance gives the literal meaning of *deraon* to be "an object of aversion"; hence it is not the subjective consciousness of the guilty that is spoken of, but the detestation in which their memory is held by others which is declared to be everlasting. And that this is the true interpretation is confirmed by other passages of Scripture in which the reward of impiety is stated to be everlasting dishonour, abiding, not in the consciousness of the punished, but in the recollection of them retained by those who observe their punishment: in the first case Jeremiah's persecutors are spoken of, and in the second the unfaithful nation of Judah, viz. :—

Jer. xx. 11, "They shall be greatly ashamed, because they have not dealt wisely, even with an everlasting dishonour, which shall never be forgotten."

Jer. xxiii. 40, "I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten."

Thus, by allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, we find a confirmation of our conclusion as to the true meaning of the "everlasting contempt" spoken of in Daniel xii. 2.

New Testament uses.

I. Of that which is divine.

- (a) God Himself. Rom. xvi. 24. "The eternal God." Heb. ix. 14, "The eternal Spirit."
- (b) His attributes. 1 Tim. vi. 16, "To whom be honour and power eternal."
- (c) His kingdom. 2 Peter i. 11, "Entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord."
- (d) Spiritual experiences. 2 Cor. iv. 17, "An eternal weight of glory"; 2 Tim. ii. 10, "Salvation in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory."
- (e) Condition or locality. Luke xvi. 9, "Into the eternal habitations"; 1 Peter v. 10, "God . . . called us into His eternal glory"; 2 Cor. ix. 18, "The things which are not seen are eternal"; 2 Cor. v. 1, "We have a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens."

Under this last subdivision belongs the term "eternal life" (*zōē aiōnios*), which is used no less than forty-four times in the New Testament, and to this we may add a remarkable passage in which Paul writes to Philemon regarding his runaway slave Onesimus, now converted and returning to his master with Paul's letter of loving commendation, "perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season that thou shouldst have him for ever."—Philemon 15. Here the word 'for ever' is the adjective *aiōnios* agreeing with the pronoun 'him,' meaning, "that thou shouldst have him as an eternal friend or

companion in the world to come." As with persons and things divine spoken of in the Old Testament as eternal, so also in all the above category the word *aiōnios* must be understood in its fullest sense of 'everlasting,' for obviously that which is divine, whether person or condition, abides unending. Divine action may be terminable; divine condition or being is without end.

2. Of the ages planned by God, viz. Rom. xvi. 25,
2 Tim. i. 9, Titus i. 2.

In each of these three passages we have the ages of earth's history as viewed from the divine standpoint; and if in the second category of things spoken of in the Old Testament as 'everlasting' we find ourselves compelled by the nouns with which *aiōnios* is associated to interpret it to mean, "lasting to its limit," so here looking back to creation's early days and even before then, we find the meaning of *aiōnios* to be "going back to its limit." And in these "eternal times" there are two undeniable marks of non-eternity, viz. They are spoken of as 'times' (Gk. *chronoi*); and in two out of the three passages God's action that pre-dated them is spoken of. The passages are as follows:—

Rom. xvi. 25 (R.V.), "According to the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal."

2 Tim. i. 9 (R.V.), "His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal."

Titus i. 2 (R.V.), "Eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal."

Further light will be thrown on this remarkable expression "eternal times," when we come to study the uses of the noun '*aiōn*' in LXX and the New Testament; and it will be found there that our conclusion stands that these eternal or æonian times (Gk. *chronoi aiōnioi*) do not date back to an origin lost in the mists of eternity.

3. Of action and activities, various.

Punishment. Matt. xxv. 46.

Judgment.¹ Mark iii. 29. Heb. vi. 2.

Sin. Mark iii. 29 (R.V.).

Destruction. 2 Thess. i. 9.

Salvation. Heb. v. 9.

Redemption. Heb. ix. 12,

and to these must be added the activity already noted in Chapter V,

Fire. Matt. xviii. 3; xxv. 41; Jude 7.

Now when *aiōnios* is attached to such nouns of action, the question arises whether the eternity spoken of is eternity of the process or of the result. If the former be the correct interpretation, we must then understand them to mean

Endless punishing.

Endless judging.

Endless sinning.

Endless destroying.

Endless saving.

Endless redeeming.

In at least three of the above, it is at once apparent that this interpretation is inadmissible. None would ever dream of claiming that the Great White Throne is set for ever, and that the Son of Man will be for ever and for ever judging the dead. Nor would any claim that eternal

¹ I have rendered it 'judgment' rather than 'damnation' for two reasons, viz. that 'damnation' suggests to the English reader condemnation rather than judgment, the Greek for which is not *krisis* or *krima*, but the compound noun—*katakrisis* or *katakrima*. And further, the English term 'damnation,' by force of religious use, has come to be commonly understood of the condition of doom under which the wicked dead are supposed to live for ever in the lake of fire. But the Greek word, whether it be *krisis*, as in Mark iii. 29, or *krima*, as in Heb. vi. 2, means simply judgment, that and nothing more. In classical Greek there would be a slight distinction between the feminine verbal noun ending in *-sis* and the neuter verbal noun ending in *-ma*, the former being rather the process of the action, and the latter the act accomplished. But in the Hellenistic Greek of the New Testament, this discrimination of meaning is not observed, and in either case our English word 'judgment' covers both shades of meaning.

salvation means 'endless saving'; for while it is blessedly true that for us there is a salvation both past, present, and future, yet none surely will deny that when "this mortal shall have put on immortality," when "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is," then our salvation will be complete. And, if possible, this conclusion is still more emphatic in the case of eternal redemption. Indeed, the very passage where the phrase occurs speaks of Christ, upon His entry into heaven, as *having obtained* eternal redemption for us. The price of our redemption was paid once for all; our redemption was complete when, "through His own blood" (R.V.), He "entered in once for all into the holy place"; and of this redemption once wrought, the result for ever abides. Now if this interpretation is thus certain in the case of three of these nouns of action, viz. judgment, salvation, redemption, our principle of interpreting the uncertain by the certain will here apply, and we shall expect to find in these three other cases also that the eternity spoken of is eternity, not of the process, but of the result. Not only does it make perfect sense in all these three cases, as well as harmonizing with the interpretation established in the case of the first three; but it also coincides with the interpretation which we have already found must on other grounds apply to *pur aiōnion*. The action of the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah was not endless in its process, but it was eternal in its result. The unquenchable fire that is to burn up the chaff in the day of judgment will not keep that chaff for ever burning. In every case this interpretation fits with nouns expressing action or activity; and this becomes yet more certainly established when we deal also with some nouns to which *aiōnios* is attached, which may be expressive either of action or of condition. In these it will be seen, that if the meaning is condition, then as in 'eternal life' *aiōnios* will simply and naturally mean endless; if, however, it is action that is intended by them, then the only meaning that gives sense is eternity, not of the process, but of the result. These nouns are the following:—

Eternal comfort.—2 Thess. ii. 16 (R.V.).

Eternal inheritance.—Heb. ix. 15.

Eternal covenant.—Heb. xiii. 20 (R.V.).

Eternal gospel.—Rev. xiv. 6 (R.V.).

Now, if comfort (A.V. consolation) means, as it possibly might, the act of consoling, it is obvious that the eternity spoken of is not in the action and process of consoling, but in the result. The comfort given abides eternally in the heart of the comforted. Similarly, inheritance might conceivably mean the act of inheriting: more naturally it will mean the thing inherited. Endless inheriting is obviously not the thought, but the permanent continuance of the thing inherited. So also covenant might grammatically mean the act of covenanting, which none could imagine as being endless; the result, however, of the covenanting process, i.e. the covenant made, will abide for ever. . . . The word 'Gospel' (good news) might occasionally mean the presentation of that good news; more naturally we understand it of the content of the good news. Its presentation surely will not be endless, but the results thereby produced will endure as long as God is God. This exhausts the New Testament use of the word *aiōnios* when attached to nouns expressing activity or action.

It may be well here to offer a few words of comment on the striking phrase, 'eternal sin,' which, as will be seen above, is the reading adopted by the R.V. in Mark iii. 29 in place of the A.V. 'eternal damnation.'¹

It is sometimes urged that as the sinner in the lake of fire will never repent of his sin and is immortal, he will therefore be endlessly sinning, and this will both justify and necessitate his being endlessly punished. [Be it noted this argument hinges on the assumption that the sinner is immortal.] But to come to the context in which 'eternal sin' is spoken of, it will be seen that it is a specific definite sin which is referred to. And a careful attention to the context will show both what this sin

¹ See note above, p. 114.

against the Holy Ghost is, and why it is called 'an eternal sin.' It will be remembered that the Scribes who had come down from Jerusalem had attributed the marvellous powers which they saw in Jesus to a satanic source. They could not deny them, for those powers were patent to all; but to escape yielding to Christ's claims because of them, they wilfully attributed His divine powers to a demoniacal source. Now obviously this put them beyond the reach of His Spirit; He could not move them while they, seeing the manifestation of God's power and presence in Him, wilfully asserted those powers to be not from above, but from beneath. It is a well-known fact, both in Scripture and in experience, that a man may wilfully persevere in a wrong moral choice, until that choice becomes practically irrevocable. So here, these Scribes, having seen both the holiness and the power of Jesus, and having, in order to escape surrender to His claims, turned light into darkness and darkness into light, attributing those heavenly powers to Beelzebub, were guilty of a sin from which there was no returning, from which in the nature of the case they would never wish to return. The sin was not endless in its process, but in its result and consequences; and hence was and is the sin for which there is no forgiveness, for it will never be repented of. But before we leave these passages it is only fair that we should face one objection drawn from Matthew xxv. 46 against our conclusion. It is said to be incredible that *aiōnios* should be used in two parallel clauses with differing shades of meaning. But to urge this is to overlook the fact that while *aiōnios* when attached to a noun of condition, if that condition be a divine one, means endless, it equally means endless as applied to a noun of action, but this endlessness is invariably to be found not in the process, but in the condition produced by that action. There is the same endlessness of condition in both: the life—itself a condition—is endless; the condition produced by the punishment—death—is as endless as the life. And so far from its being indefensible to assert that *aiōnios* can be used with different shades of meaning

in the same sentence, those who so urge have overlooked that it is actually so used once in LXX and twice in the New Testament. In the first case earthly mountains are spoken of as everlasting in close juxtaposition to the everlasting ways of God Himself. In the latter two, 'times eternal,' which we have already seen had a beginning, are in close association with the eternity of God Himself and with that eternal life which is His gift.

Hab. iii. 6, "The everlasting mountains were scattered, . . . His ways are everlasting."

Rom. xvi. 25, 26, "According to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began (Gk. *chronois aiōniois*, R.V., "through times eternal") . . . according to the commandment of the everlasting God."

Titus i. 2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (Gk. *pro chronōn aiōniōn*, R.V., "before times eternal.")

Thus we are brought once more face to face with the wise caution of Bishop Moule that to interpret aright the word *aiōnios* we must look to the noun to which it is attached, rather than to the word itself, to find whether the duration of which it speaks is limited or unlimited. If our reader will grant it as a right principle of exegesis that Scripture should interpret Scripture for us, and if Scripture itself be the right field in which to ascertain the correct interpretation of Scripture terminology, then we trust that he will accept the conclusion reached in this chapter as one obtained by a patient, exhaustive, and fair-minded study. For let it be noted that every single instance of the use of the word *aiōnios* in the New Testament has been passed in review; and the writer makes bold to claim that he has treated the subject with transparent honesty, and with no desire whatever beyond that of ascertaining what God has revealed upon the subject, and that the conclusion reached has been a self-evidencing one.

The study of the scriptural usage of the word *aiōnios* would not be complete without a further enquiry into the scriptural meaning and use of the noun *aiōn*, 'an age,' from which the adjective *aiōnios*, 'age long,' 'everlasting,' is derived. We believe that the scriptural meaning of *aiōnios* when applied to the doom of the wicked has been established with sufficient clearness and certainty above; but a study of *aiōn* and its uses will not only confirm our conclusion there reached, but will be also of great value in enabling us to interpret Scripture language in the Book of Revelation regarding the lake of fire, which will be dealt with in a later chapter.

For the reader of our English Bible this study, like that of the scriptural usage of the word 'hell,' is complicated by the fact that the word *aiōn* has suffered at the hands of the translators. Properly meaning an 'age' or 'era,' in Greek as in English sometimes defined and sometimes undefined in duration, in our A.V. it is commonly translated 'world.' And the Revisers, hesitating to change it, have generally given the more correct rendering 'age' in the margin as an alternative. In the A.V., therefore, it is difficult to avoid confusing it with the Greek word *kosmos*, which is also translated 'world.' Now while *kosmos* is this world of ours in its material framework, *aiōn* is the world in the sense of earth's history in the framework of time, or perhaps we should rather say the setting of time in the framework of eternity—the history of finite man in a finite world, bounded at either end by the expanse of a timeless eternity. And while it is apparent to readers of the Greek New Testament that our great and gracious God, before creation and before man came into being, looked down the long vistas of time, and planned human history as falling within definite ages, each having its special characteristics and each its divinely planned purpose, all working to a final glorious goal and consummation, this is hidden from the eye of the reader of the A.V. and in the R.V. only discernible to the eye of the student who notes the alternative renderings in the margin. Thus, the fact

that God made 'the worlds' by His Son (Heb. i. 2) should read :—

“ through whom also He made the ages,”

in keeping with which it is written later in the same epistle (Heb. xi. 3, R.V., marg.) that “ through faith we understand that the ages were framed by the word of God.” We were not there to see or hear, for man was not yet made ; we only know the fact because God has told us so, and hence it is through faith, not by sight, nor by scientific deduction, that we understand that God laid out beforehand the framework of the ages. And by revelation God has made known to us the purpose of the ages which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.¹ The Gospel of His grace has been a secret from all ages past hid in God,² but made known to us of the Gospel day upon whom the ends of the ages are come.³ God, Himself the King of the ages,⁴ who laid His wonderful redemption plans before the ages⁵ for a world of humanity that would go astray, saw fit once at the end of the (preparatory) ages to send forth His Son,⁶ the ultimate fulfilment and consummation of which plans shall yet in the ages to come⁷ be a gracious wonder to all beholders, even as already they are the admiration of principalities and powers in the heavenly places.⁸

We are still, however, faced with a very real difficulty, which confronted us equally in dealing with the adjective *aiōnios*, and which we have already anticipated above in saying that the Greek word *aiōn*, like the English word 'age,' can be used alike of a period whose duration is defined or undefined. If *aiōnios* sometimes means 'everlasting' in its full unlimited sense, so also have we seen that it is at times used in Scripture undeniably of things and times that have a limit, and in that case can only mean, “ lasting to its own proper limit,” i.e. to the limit of the age to which it belongs. Thus, also, *aiōn* and

¹ Eph. iii. 11 (R.V. marg.).

² 1 Cor. x. 11 (R.V.).

⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 7 (Gk.).

⁷ Eph. ii. 7.

² Eph. iii. 9 ; Col. i. 26.

⁴ 1 Tim. i. 17 (R.V. marg.).

⁶ Heb. ix. 26 (R.V.).

⁸ Eph. iii. 10.

aiōnes (singular and plural), 'age' and 'ages,' will sometimes be found in Scripture to be spoken of an age or ages that have a definite known limit, past or future ; and yet again the words will often denote a boundless period or periods, of which the end is hidden from us. In the former category of limited periods fall the ages that precede the Cross and terminate there ; to this category also belong this present age in which we live and the age which is to follow this, the age of the personal reign of Christ on earth. Occasionally linked together, these two ages are generally contrasted, for in this present evil age¹ our King is still rejected and by the world disowned, the devil is still the god of this age² ; hence we are bidden not to be conformed to this age,³ although once we walked according to the course (R.V. margin. Gk. age) of this world . . . of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience.⁴ Ours is not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, which are coming to nought.⁵ True, in their own generation the children of this age are wiser than the children of light⁶ : but ours is the better portion, for the children of this age marry and are given in marriage, but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage ; neither can they die any more ; for they are equal unto the angels ; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.⁷

The first resurrection then, the resurrection unto life, is the boundary between this age and the coming one. That he who leaves all and follows Christ shall receive an hundredfold more in this age, is the promise of Jesus, and in the age to come eternal life,⁸ that is, its full fruition. In this age of the Spirit we taste, it is true, the powers of the age to come,⁹ but the supernatural which is rare to-day shall be the normal of to-morrow, when the day of the restitution of all things¹⁰ is here, the day when even the animal¹¹ and vegetable¹² kingdoms

¹ Gal. i. 4.⁴ Eph. ii. 2 (R.V.).⁷ Luke xx. 34-36.¹⁰ Acts iii. 21.² 2 Cor. iv. 4.⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 5.⁸ Mark x. 30.¹¹ Rom xix. 22.³ Rom. xii. 2.⁶ Luke xvi. 8.⁹ Heb. vi. 5.¹² Isa. xxxiv. 1, 2, 7.

shall share in deliverance from the curse. We have tasted of the riches of God's grace here and now ; in the ages to come¹ we shall taste yet more ; then we shall be perfectly like our Saviour, for we shall see Him as He is.² Caught up to meet Him when He comes in the clouds, we shall be for ever with the Lord,³ whether our ministry be with Him on earth, when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ,⁴ or whether it be in the new heaven and the new earth,⁵ when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and when God shall be all in all.⁶ Thus it would seem that the ' ages to come ' will emerge into that great and endless eternity, entrance into which is unfolded to us in the two closing chapters of the Book of Revelation. But, and here is the crux, calling for faithful patient candid study of God's word, the question then arises, how shall we know when the word *aiōn* is being used of the ages that are limited, and when of that great eternity which is boundless, the expanse of which no finite human mind can measure ? For if it is clear that this age and the coming one have their limits, foreseen by the eye of God and foretold by the word of God, even as the past ages have had their completion, so also is it equally clear that a great and boundless eternity is to follow and that the word *aiōn* is used of both.

For *aiōn*, as well as being spoken of the particular and definite ages above-named, is also frequently used, both in LXX and in the New Testament, especially with prepositions prefixed, to mean ' for ever ' in the sense of an endless eternity. The phrases ' unto the age,' ' until the age,' ' unto the ages of the ages ' are frequent in this sense. This can be quickly seen by taking a concordance and noting therein how frequently in the Old Testament and New Testament alike that which is divine, whether it be the Persons of the Godhead or their divine gifts and blessings, is said to be ' for

¹ Eph. ii. 7.² 1 John iii. 2.³ 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18.⁴ Rev. xi. 15.⁵ Rev. xxi. 1.⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

ever.' But side by side with this unmistakable use of *aiōn* in the full sense of the term 'eternal,' we find, as with *aiōnios*, that it is spoken of persons, things, and experiences which in the nature of the case are limited, and we are therefore compelled to understand *aiōn* in these instances as referring to periods which are limited and terminable. And precisely as we found the word *aiōnios* used with either a forward or a backward look, to be interpreted in the one case "lasting to its limit," and in the other, "going back to its limit"; so likewise with *aiōn* have we the boundary sometimes in the future and occasionally in the past. And we shall not be surprised to find that in neither case could our translators render the word or phrase 'eternal,' 'everlasting,' or 'for ever.' Actual examples will make this clear, e.g. Paul said:—

"If meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no meat *while the world standeth*."—1 Cor. viii. 13.

Here he used precisely the same phrase as Christ (viz. *eis ton aiōna*, unto the age) when the latter speaking of Himself as the Bread of Life said:—

"If any man eat of this bread, he shall live *for ever*."—John vi. 51.

But our translators were right to give the limited translation in the former case, for it is manifest that Paul had in view his own earthly life only, meaning, "however long I live, I will never eat that which might cause offence."

Equally is it obvious that when Peter said to the Lord,

"Thou shalt *never* wash my feet."—John xiii. 8,

literally, Thou shalt not wash my feet 'to the age,' he did not mean Thou shalt not wash my feet to all eternity, but, not so long as I live. And when the Saviour said to the fig tree,

"Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward *for ever*,"
Matt. xxi. 19,

He was not thinking of the possibility of the fig tree bearing fruit to eternity, but He condemned it to fruitlessness for the remainder of its life.

And this limited sense of *aiōn*, looking towards a terminable future, is yet more apparent in the LXX, for in the Old Testament it is very frequently used, like *aiōnios*, of ordinances and statutes which were to last to the limit of their own dispensation, e.g.

“The priest’s office shall be theirs (i.e. Aaron’s and his sons’) for a *perpetual* statute.” (LXX *eis ton aiōna*, ‘to the age.’).—Exod. xxix. 9.

“It shall be a *perpetual* statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.”—Lev. iii. 17.

“These stones (taken from the midst of Jordan) shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel *for ever*.”—Joshua iv. 7.

“Joshua burnt Ai, and made it a heap *for ever*, even a desolation unto this day.”—Joshua viii. 28.

And this last was the divinely appointed fate of any Israelite city wherein the people turned aside to idolatry,

“Thou shalt burn with fire the city . . . and it shall be an heap *for ever*; it shall not be built again.”—Deut. xiii. 16.

And it is especially noticeable that both the word *aiōnios* and the phrase *eis ton aiōna* are used frequently of the temporal judgments threatened by God alike for Israel and for the hostile nations round about her.

“My people hath forgotten Me . . . to make their land desolate, and a *perpetual* hissing.”—Jer. xviii. 15, 16.

“I will punish the king of Babylon . . . and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it *perpetual* desolations.”—Jer. xxv. 12.

"Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse, and all the cities thereof shall be *perpetual* wastes."—Jer. xlix. 13.

"I will make thee (Mount Seir) *perpetual* desolations, and thy cities shall not return."—Ezek. xxxv. 9.

"Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and salt pits, and a *perpetual* desolation."—Zeph. ii. 9.

And the language used by God through the mouth of Isaiah to foretell His judgments upon Edom is particularly significant, because the language used in Revelation by the angel to describe the coming doom of the worshippers of the beast and their sufferings in the lake of fire is very similar, so that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the one is divinely intended to be both a symbol and a forecast of the other.

Here is the word of the Lord regarding Edom to His servant Isaiah :—

"It is the day of the Lord's vengeance . . . and the streams thereof (of the land of Edom) shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day ; the smoke thereof shall go up *for ever* ; from generation to generation it shall lie waste ; none shall pass through it *for ever and ever*."—Isa. xxxiv. 8-10.

While the word of the angel to the aged seer of Patmos is,

"If any man worship the beast and his image . . . the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God . . . and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb ; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever* ; and they have no rest, day nor night, who worship the beast and his image."—Rev. xiv. 9-11.

That the prophet himself recognized that the fiery judgment thus foretold upon the land of Edom would be strictly terminable is shown by the words with which he immediately continues his description of the desolation wrought.

“ But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it ; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it . . . and thorns shall come up in her palaces ; nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof . . . the wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island . . . the screech owl shall also rest there, and find herself a place of rest.”—Isa. xxxiv. 11-14.

Now, it is obvious that neither animal nor vegetable life could remain while the land was like a furnace of burning pitch, enveloped in volumes of ascending smoke. The prophet himself therefore interprets for us the fiery judgment as ceasing, however overwhelming for the time being it might be, and however long the memory of its horror might abide. Thus when we come to consider the language of the Apocalypse relative to the final judgment of the lake of fire, we shall be able to take this Scripture key wherewith to interpret the seeming interminability of judgment of which it speaks. It will only be needful in closing this chapter here to remark that our translators of both Versions themselves uphold us in this interpretation by the fact that they have found themselves unable always to translate *aiōn* and *aiōnios* by English words involving endlessness or eternity in the full sense of that word ; for as we have seen above, they have used the word ‘ perpetual ’ frequently, and once the phrase ‘ while the world standeth,’ in their endeavour to represent it correctly in English in passages where the context forbids us to understand it of unlimited duration. And we may add that as our translators have done this in translating these words in their forward look to the future, so equally in the backward gaze at the past they have again and again avoided translating them ‘ from everlasting ’ or ‘ from

eternity,' seeing that the context determines the time spoken of as having had a beginning; hence they have translated it 'from of old' or 'since the world began.'

The following are examples from both the Old Testament and New Testament of this backward look of *aiōn*, spoken of a period which had a beginning not lost in the mists of eternity, but dating at farthest from the dawn of time. They are frequent in the Old Testament and occasional in the New Testament, but whether frequent or occasional they reveal indisputably that these two Greek words speak of periods which had a beginning, no less than, as we have seen above, of periods that have had or will have an end. Hence it is impossible for the candid student of Scripture to claim that these words always and necessarily bear the meaning of 'eternal,' 'everlasting,' unlimited in duration of time. As above, the words italicized in English are the words used to translate the words *aiōn* and *aiōnios* occurring in the original.

"The same became mighty men which were *of old*."—Gen. vi. 4.

"He hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been *long dead*."—Ps. cxliii. 3.

"Remove not the *ancient* landmark, which thy fathers have set."—Prov. xxii. 28.

"There is no new thing under the sun . . . it hath been already *of old time* which was before us."—Eccles. i. 9, 10.

"They that be of thee shall build *the old* waste places."—Isa. lviii. 12.

"The prophets that have been before me and before thee (Jeremiah is speaking here to Hananiah) *of old* prophesied . . . against many countries."—Jer. xxviii. 8.

These examples from the Old Testament might be duplicated many times over. The following are from the New Testament :—

“As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been *since the world began*.”¹—Luke i. 70 (A.V. and R.V.).

“Known unto God are all His works *from the beginning of the world*.”—Acts xv. 18 (A.V.).

“The Lord, who maketh these things known *from of old*.”—Acts xv. 18 (R.V.).

“*Since the world began* was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.”—John ix. 32 (A.V. and R.V.).

Perhaps most remarkable of all in the New Testament are the words in Jude 25, *pro pantas tou aiōnos*, not appearing in the Authorized Version, and translated by the Revisers ‘before all time,’ occurring in the ascription of praise with which the epistle closes:—

Unto Him . . . be glory . . . *before all time*, and now, and for evermore,

where the words ‘for evermore’ are a translation of the Greek words *eis pantas tous aiōnas*, i.e. ‘unto all the ages,’ as the R.V. gives it in the margin. Here then we have in closest proximity to each other a strictly limited use of *aiōn* followed by one in which the successive ages would seem to have no limit. By this it would appear that the difficulty is as great, in the original as in the English, of representing aright the terminable and the interminable by one and the same word. And the difficulty, whether present in the English or the Greek, should at once guard us against being dogmatic or over-confident in our interpretations of the divine word on this subject.

And if the Bible student ask in conclusion, But what about the Hebrew of the Old Testament? Why have you said nothing of that? It will be sufficient to reply:—

¹ The Greek here is *ap’ aiōnos*, ‘from the age,’ and is translated as above both in A.V. and in R.V. So likewise in Acts iii. 21, and in the passages that follow, except the last, which has *ek tou aiōnos*, with the same meaning.

1. that the link between the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament is the Greek of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament which was made in Alexandria by Jewish elders less than three hundred years before Christ ;
2. and that a reference to the Hebrew concordance, to the word *olam*,¹ which is represented by the Greek *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, will reveal that Hebrew scholars recognize that the word, while practically representing 'eternity,' is also often used, as we have seen, of things which forbid the sense of unlimited or endless duration.

¹ The following is from Strong's "Concordance" under the Hebrew word *olam*. (Scholars will understand the abbreviations, and will note the many different renderings adopted in our A.V.)

Prop. concealed, i.e. the vanishing point ; gen. time out of mind (past or future), i.e. practically, eternity ; freq. adv. (espec. with prep. pref.) alway(s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, long (time), (of) old (time), perpetual, at any time, beginning of the world, world without end.

CHAPTER VII

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED—OUR LORD'S TEACHINGS (*contd.*)

IN considering the destiny of the wicked, as set forth in the New Testament, we have thus far listened to our Lord's words on hell, the fiery Gehenna of which the Valley of Hinnom was the recognized symbol. Gehenna, be it remembered, is the only Greek word which represents the English term 'hell' when that term is used in its usual modern acceptation of the place of the final punishment of lost souls.

We will now examine our Lord's teachings as to the ultimate fate of the wicked, as displayed in the illustrations with which His speech abounded, illustrations found sometimes in the figures of speech He used, sometimes in His parables, and occasionally derived from historic instances of judgment already meted out. To tabulate these will the better call attention to their cumulative force. They fall into two natural groups, illustrations from the inanimate, and illustrations from human life. To take the former first :—

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE INANIMATE

The fall of the house built on the sand.—Matt. vii.
26, 27.

Tares gathered and burned.—Matt. xiii. 40.

Bad fish cast away.—Matt. xiii. 48.

A plant rooted up.—Matt. xv. 13.

A tree cut down.—Luke xiii. 7.

Turning a withered branch.—John xv. 6.

Before going to press, a thoughtful friend, who has read the text, has attached to this reference the following note,

It will be seen that in every one of the above instances the figure employed denotes the destruction of the article spoken of: the force of the figure lies in the completeness, sometimes swift and sudden, of the destruction of the thing dealt with, involving in every case its utter and final disintegration. Did the house built on the sand fall beneath the storm? It would crumble to a heap of ruins. Are tares gathered and burned? They are finished and gone. Are bad fish cast away? Putrefying, they rot and are no more. Is a plant rooted up? A plant it quickly ceases to be. Is a tree cut down? The lumber may remain, but it ceases to be a tree. Is a withered branch cast into the fire and burned? It turns to ash, and disappears.

Now we ask the thoughtful reader, If the doom of the lost had been present to our Saviour's mind as an endless life in torment, a never-ending conscious vitality, preserved in awful suffering, whether of mind or body, would He have chosen such figures as the above to picture such a doom? And if the answer be 'no,' then it is evident that somehow somewhere Scripture has been misread or misinterpreted by those who believe that eternal punishment means endless punishing. For it involves them in the painful but inevitable inference that our Divine Master, in speaking of a subject which calls for such scrupulous exactitude as the final doom of the impenitent, has chosen illustrations which on their face convey a wholly different meaning, a wellnigh

which I give below in its entirety. It raises, of course, the profound and difficult question, which also faces us in that intensely solemn passage (Heb. vi. 4-8) whether those who have been once enlightened, with other high privileges of grace, can fall away, and if so, whether the doom of the finally impenitent will be theirs. I leave the text as it stands, to cover at least the awful possibility of this, but give herewith my friend's note for the thoughtful consideration of the reader: 'Burning a withered branch' Does not this signify the utter uselessness of an unfruitful Christian rather than the doom of the unsaved? For it is 'every branch IN ME.' Again, page 132, 'the evil servant cut asunder' [marg. 'cut off']—does not this teach the loss suffered by an unfaithful Christian? [See 1 Cor. iii. 15.] If these two illustrations should be taken as referring to unfaithful Christians, then [page 134, lines 18 and 21] instead of seventeen it would be fifteen, and line 24, thirteen. Again, page 138, Matt. xxiv. 48-51, the same question arises.

contrary meaning, to that which He is supposed to have had in mind. And let it be remembered that Christ's use of such illustrations, expressive of final and utter disintegration, was anticipated by His forerunner. John the Baptist, as we have already seen, likened the end of the wicked to the burning up of chaff by unquenchable fire, a blaze inextinguishable till its work was done. His other recorded illustration is equally radical: "Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the tree; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."—Matt. iii. 10. What fate does this represent other than final and complete obliteration?

We now subjoin a list of the illustrations which Christ gives drawn from human life:—

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HUMAN LIFE

The wicked husbandmen destroyed.—Matt. xxi. 41; Luke xx. 16.

The rejector ground to powder (R.V. scattered as dust).—Matt. xxi. 44.

The evil servant cut asunder.—Matt. xxiv. 51.

The Galileans slain by Pilate.—Luke xiii. 2.

The men on whom the tower of Siloam fell.—Luke xiii. 5.

Those drowned in the flood.—Luke xvii. 27.

The men of Sodom and Gomorrha.—Luke xvii. 29.

The fate of Lot's wife.—Luke xvii. 32.

The rebellious citizens slain.—Luke xix. 14, 27.

The debtor held in prison.—Matt. v. 26; xviii. 34.

The offender cast into outer darkness.—Matt. viii. 12; xxii. 13; xxv. 30.

A perusal of the above reveals that all the illustrations except the last two denote capital punishment. With these two exceptions the fate portrayed is in every instance sudden, swift, violent, and final. The figure is that of death, aggravated by more or less attendant horrors.

But here our opponent will put in a demurrer.

“ Yes,” says he, “ I grant that the figure is of death, but death does not end human life. It merely changes its condition. And thus we see its fitness as an illustration of the ‘ second death,’ which does not end life but perpetuates it in a condition of irrevocable horror. And with this agree the two illustrations which you have noted as exceptional, viz. of the servant bound hand and foot, and cast into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Here is continued life and conscious suffering. And the debtor, cast into prison, remains there until he has paid the uttermost farthing, which, as he never can pay it, means his endless continuance in prison.”

It sounds a strong case, and I gladly meet it, convinced that it will not sustain the endless torment theory under a close and careful examination. Let us remind ourselves that there is a world of difference between possible inference and necessary inference, when offered as a proof. A necessary inference is as good a proof as a direct statement ; but a possible inference is worthless as a proof, unless it can be shown to be upheld by other and incontrovertible evidence. Then it is admissible as secondary and corroborative evidence ; it is never more than this.

Now in the case of the servant cast into outer darkness, this much is certain : the weeping and gnashing of teeth denote the presence of conscious suffering. But how long that suffering and that consciousness remain we are not told. There is nothing whatever to suggest its endless continuance ; such it might have been, as far as this context goes, were there no other Scriptures to rebut it. It is at best but a possible inference, and we have already seen that every illustration drawn by our Lord from things inanimate denotes a final dissolution. Hence we rightly infer a final dissolution here. The figure in no way militates against it. Again, the wicked man is likened to a debtor cast into prison, nor released thence till he shall have paid the uttermost farthing. Here the emphasis

of the figure lies in the fact that the debt is irrevocable ; it must be paid to the very last farthing, before there can be freedom for the debtor. But we know from the parable (Matt. xviii. 25) that the servant had not wherewith to pay. He was therefore in a hopeless case. There was no prospect of release from prison, however long that imprisonment might be. The purpose of the illustration is to convey the lesson that the doom is an irrevocable one. So far it is in perfect harmony with the conclusion we have already drawn from Scripture, that the doom of Gehenna is final and irrevocable, ending in dissolution. To press the figure of the debtor in prison beyond this would be to make exceptional language the interpreter of the more usual, to interpret the certain by the uncertain, to make the necessary inference give way to the possible. Such logic can only bring confusion. Perhaps the most striking way to sum up the conclusion will be to point out that here are seventeen different illustrations offered by our Saviour Himself, portraying the doom of the wicked, a list which it is believed is comprehensive. Of these seventeen, only two are capable of being interpreted as meaning an unending existence in punishment, but the inference, while possible, is not a necessary one. Of the remaining fifteen, all bespeak an end which issues in dissolution ; and while three may be thought to refer only to bodily punishment attendant immediately upon our Lord's return to earth, the remainder¹ can unhesitatingly be declared to picture the final doom of the impenitent. It should in fairness be pointed out that the two illustrations of being cast into outer darkness or kept in prison were used by the Saviour on different occasions, the former thrice, and the latter twice. If this be allowed its full arithmetical value the figures will stand thus :—

- A. Illustrations possibly denoting endless existence—5.
- B. Illustrations certainly denoting ultimate dissolution—12.

¹ With the possible exception of the two named in the last footnote.

C. Illustrations possibly denoting ultimate dissolution—3.

But it must be borne in mind that the two illustrations under A five times spoken are not incompatible with final dissolution; hence it must be conceded that if our Lord's utterances are not self-contradictory, the endless existence theory must yield to that of dissolution. And this has been already established on quite independent grounds.

But we have still to meet the argument that the figure in all the remaining illustrations taken from human life by our Saviour and quoted above was that of the death of the body, and that this, so far from representing extinction, represents continued life under a changed condition. This also is an unfair argument, for the very fact that the doom of the lost is spoken of as the 'second death' shows that the penalty has something so precisely in common with the first death, the death of the body, that from this very resemblance in kind it is called *the second death*. What then is death of the body? What is its most obvious and characteristic feature, observable by all and intelligible to all? Is it that the soul or spirit, the late tenant of the mortal frame, is still living? No; of this our senses have no cognizance. We know it from divine revelation, and we apprehend it by faith.¹ But this is not the obvious and appalling characteristic, universally understood and felt, that makes death the common enemy of all human kind. What is it then? It is the scythe in the reaper's hand, wherewith he cuts life short: it is the hour-glass in his keeping, from which the sands of life have run out. This is at once the supreme and obvious fact of death in the physical realm. Death is the cessation of physical life, resulting in the dissolution of the mortal frame. The man is no more, his voice

¹ It is significant to note that this fact of survival after death, which we accept by faith, is a secret which the spiritualist and the philosopher, not satisfied with revelation, are labouring to demonstrate by other means, the latter by reasoning, the former by intercourse with the unseen world.

is stilled, his eyes are closed, he lies motionless, his arms crossed on his breast. Already decay has begun, and we bury our dead out of our sight. The physical man disintegrates, his body ceases to be, it returns to dust. What then do we naturally infer the 'second death' to be, by the very nature of the term used to denote it? What but the dissolution of soul and spirit as well as of body? If the first death results in the disintegration of the physical man, why should we refuse to believe that the second death results in the disintegration of the whole man? It is an awful thought indeed, but let us not forget that it is our Creator Himself, the Great Life-giver, who has bidden us "fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell."

It will be perhaps helpful if we here set out in the form of a table the analogy between the first and the second death, as interpreted by the two opposing views.

DEATH.—WHAT IS IT?

FINAL EXTINCTION VIEW.

ETERNAL TORMENT VIEW.

1st Death :

Body <i>dies</i> .—Soul survives. ¹	<i>Separation</i> of soul and
Visible. Unseen.	body.
Obvious Revealed	Soul survives.
to to	Body decays.
senses. faith.	

2nd Death :

Body <i>dies</i> .—Soul <i>dies</i> .	<i>Separation</i> from God.
The analogy lies in that	Soul and body survive,
which is obvious and recog-	both in ruin, both in
nized by all.	torment.

¹ It is but fair to say that, subsequent to the writing of the above, the author, in studying the writings of some who hold Conditional Immortality, notably Canon Constable, late Prebendary of Cork, finds that they have a much stronger scriptural case than he was aware of for holding the belief that the dead are unconscious between death and resurrection. This view, however, he is unable at present to harmonize with certain Scriptures, which seem undeniably to speak of conscious survival in the intermediate state. The question is certainly one worthy of fuller study with an open mind.

Which of these two analogies commends itself as the more reasonable and intelligible? We leave the reader to answer.

We now set out in full the passages named above, containing our Saviour's illustrations of the doom of the wicked when likened to physical death; and it will at once be seen that the force of the repeated comparison lies in that feature of death with which we are most cognizant, and which gives it its terror, viz. its destruction of our earthly life with all its visible powers. And if this be so, how perfectly it accords with all that we have already deduced from Scripture; immortality, the crown of reward for the righteous in the life beyond; while the wicked dead awake to a judgment which consigns them to ultimate and irrevocable destruction of the whole man. In Matthew xxi. 40, 41, our Lord draws from His hearers their opinion of the doom that awaited the disloyal husbandmen of His parable, viz. :—

“When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will He do unto those husbandmen? They say unto Him, He will *miserably destroy* those wicked men, and will let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen which shall render Him the fruits in their seasons.”

And the force of this comparison is made the more striking from the fact that our Lord follows it (v. 44) with a direct statement of the doom awaiting those who should reject Him, viz. :—

“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner . . . And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will *grind him to powder*.” (R.V. scatter him as dust.)

Again, Christ's warning against the quarrelsome servant, whom his lord's return finds unready, is as follows :—

Matt. xxiv. 48, 51. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, 'My lord delayeth his coming,' and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and shall *cut him asunder* and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The doom of the impenitent finds a graphic example noted by our Lord in the following :—

Luke xiii. 1-5. "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you: Nay, but except ye repent ye shall all *likewise perish*. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all *likewise perish*."

From among the recorded judgments of God in the Old Testament our Lord chooses three to illustrate the judgment that will overtake men at His return, the flood, the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha, and of Lot's wife.

Luke xvii. 26-33. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and *destroyed them all*. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and *destroyed them all*. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop and his stuff in the house,

let him not come down to take it away, and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."

It may be that these refer to earthly judgments immediately accompanying our Lord's return to earth to reign, rather than to the judgment of the great white throne which follows Christ's millennial reign on earth. If so, they must of course be excepted from passages which throw light on the final and eternal doom of the impenitent.

The last illustration is taken from our Lord's parable of the nobleman who went away to receive a kingdom and left his servants money to trade with. The servants received their respective awards according to the measure of their diligence or otherwise, but a drastic fate remained for those citizens who hated their lord and had sent a message of rebellion after him. His sentence on them is as follows :—

Luke xix. 27. " But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and *slay them before me.*"

The lesson learned from these illustrations of our Lord that the destiny of the wicked is final extinction is confirmed by illustrations contained in the second epistle of Peter and in the epistle of Jude. There is a close similarity even in detail between portions of these two epistles, especially on the subject of the fate of false teachers, the certainty and terrible nature of whose doom evokes these illustrations. But if one writer is endorsing and repeating the statements of another, that does not lessen the value of the fact that here are two inspired writers, one the leading apostle, the other the brother of our Lord, both corroborating our Lord's teaching as to the final dissolution of the lost. Again we tabulate the illustrations :—

By Peter—

The angels that sinned.—2 Peter ii. 4.

The flood.—2 Peter ii. 5.

Sodom and Gomorrha.—2 Peter ii. 6.

The death of animals.—2 Peter ii. 12.

By Jude—

The angels that sinned.—Jude 6.

Sodom and Gomorrha.—Jude 7.

Israel in the wilderness.—Jude 5.

The fate of Korah.—Jude 11.

Uprooted trees.—Jude 12.

Shooting stars gone out in darkness.—Jude 13.

Of these only the first and last fail to give conclusive evidence that eternity of result and not of process is the eternal punishment of Scripture. In the case of fallen angels, whose judgment is yet future, it will be seen that the likeness consists in the fact of the certainty of their coming doom. The angels are being now held in prison to await it; and so also, "The Lord knoweth how . . . to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment" (2 Peter ii. 9, R.V.); and while, like wandering stars, "the blackness of darkness for ever" is reserved for these false teachers, the point of the illustration lies in the irrevocable disappearance of the star extinguished in darkness, not in the continued existence of that star within the realm of darkness.

We quote from R.V. :—

1 Peter iii. 1. "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in *destructive* heresies,¹ denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift *destruction*. Whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their *destruction* slumbereth not. For if God spared not the

¹ Marg. Or, sects of perdition.

angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell¹ and committed them to pits of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, . . . when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly ; and delivered righteous Lot, . . . the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment."

2 Peter ii. 12. " But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed. . . . These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved."

One of the verses given above, i.e. 2 Peter ii. 12, calls for fuller comment, for even the R.V. fails to present the full force of the illustration as conveyed by the original Greek. Indeed it is difficult to render it at all adequately in English, for the Greek words *phthora* and *phtheiro* contain, as seen in chapter iii., the meaning both of physical perishability and of moral decay, a decay that ends in moral and physical dissolution. It is perhaps the only New Testament Scripture which definitely and emphatically likens the doom of the wicked to the death of the animal creation, not of course to represent the wicked as ceasing to be when they die the death of the body, but making the death of the animal, which there and then ceases to be, a true picture of the moral decay which ends in a dissolution of the whole man, spiritual, mental, and physical. The Greek is as follows :—

¹ Marg. cast them into dungeons. (Gk. into Tartarus.) This is the one place in the New Testament where Tartarus is named. It is evidently the present prison-house of the fallen angels.

houtoi de, hōs aloga zōa gegennēmena phusika eis halōsin kai phthoran, . . . en tei phthorai autōn kai phtharēsontai.

But these, as unreasoning animals, born by nature for capture and destruction (i.e. slaughter), . . . shall in their destruction surely be destroyed.

Better English, but failing to preserve the root relationship of the three words, would be :—

But these, as irrational creatures, born by nature for capture and slaughter, . . . in their moral and physical decay shall certainly perish.

The moral and physical decay of the false teacher, a moral leper, shall bring him to the end of a brute beast. Has he lived like a beast? Like a beast he shall ultimately perish. If this is not *extinction of life* as the issue of the second death, what is it?

The illustrations in the epistle of Jude are contained in the subjoined verses :—

Jude 5. "I desire to put you in remembrance . . . how that the Lord having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward *destroyed* them that believed not. And angels which kept not their own principality but left their proper habitation, He hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire. . . . Woe unto them, for they . . . *perished* in the gainsaying of Korah. These are autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, . . . wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever. And to these also Enoch . . . prophesied saying, Behold, the Lord came, with ten thousand of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to

convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought."

Glancing back through the above passages, it is worthy of note that both Peter and Jude use the words *apollumi*, *apôleia*, at one moment of known physical destruction, such as that wrought by the flood (1 Peter iii. 6), or of the fate of Korah and his companions (Jude 2), and in the next breath use the same word of the doom of the wicked, and treat the one as emblematic of the other, and a warning to avoid it. And both Peter and Jude warn their readers that the destruction by fire of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha was a divinely intended example to all future evil doers of the fate awaiting them, if they persisted in their sins.

Peter speaks of the flood as a type in both its aspects of destroying life and saving it, and it will be noted that he uses the same word 'save' alike of physical and spiritual salvation, as well as the words 'perish' and 'perdition' to denote both material and spiritual judgment. In each case the one is a divinely appointed type of the other.

1 Peter iii. 18-22. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh and quickened by the Spirit. By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were *saved* by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now *save* us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

An exhaustive study of the New Testament use of the words 'destroy,' 'perish,' and their cognates will now be in order, and should further assist us in determining the correct interpretation of their meaning when applied to the doom of the lost.

CHAPTER VIII

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE OF THE WORDS— 'DESTROY,' 'PERISH,' ETC.

IN the foregoing chapters, while studying the declarations of the New Testament concerning the doom of the impenitent, we have found the terms 'destroy,' 'perish,' with their cognates 'destruction' and 'perdition,' in frequent use to denote the nature of that doom. And we have also seen that our Lord Himself, and His Apostles Peter and Paul, give us the key to the meaning in which they themselves use the words; it is claimed, indeed, that they give us a self-evidencing interpretation of their meaning. A further and exhaustive study of the New Testament usage of the words should either confirm us in this conclusion, or else afford ground for a candid reconsideration of the question whether possibly we have been mistaken.

To obtain a rapid and yet complete survey of the New Testament usage of these terms, the clearest method will perhaps be to set out after the manner of a concordance the passages in which they occur. A few words will be sufficient to recall the immediate context to the reader's memory, and the reference to chapter and verse will enable him to study the context more fully, if so needed. It will be remembered that the question at issue is a question of the interpretation of Scripture terminology. Hence the truth seeker will come to Scripture with an earnest and candid desire to learn from Scripture itself, under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, what are the meanings of the terms therein employed. There are two opposing interpretations given to the words 'destroy,' 'perish,' when spoken of the doom of the

lost ; (1) that they mean a state of continued existence but in moral ruin ; a state of alienation from and hostility to God, accompanied by awful suffering, whether physical, mental, or spiritual, or a combination of all three, the suffering heightened by the consciousness that it is to continue for ever without relaxation or release. (2) The other interpretation is that the word 'destroy,' while involving the infliction of penal suffering, of greater or less duration, involves ultimate extinction of consciousness and cessation of life—in a word, final dissolution. Now the Greek word commonly translated 'destroy' in the New Testament is *apollumi* without its cognate noun *apōleia*, 'destruction.' 'Apollumi' is also translated to 'lose,' and in the middle voice to 'perish' ; once also to 'die.' Its cognate noun, *apōleia*, is often translated 'perdition' ; also once each 'waste,' 'perish.' Our quotations will be from the R.V.

To complete the study it will be well also to include the Greek words *olethros* and *phtheiro*, which with their derivatives are also translated 'destruction,' 'destroy,' etc., and which are sometimes used of the eternal punishment of the wicked. [Important derivatives from the root of *phtheiro* we have already dealt with above¹ under the topic of immortality.] It is believed that it will make the study simpler and clearer if the results be set out in two parallel columns, on one side giving all the literal uses of the words in relation to the physical, and on the other side their use in relation to spiritual things, in which latter it is commonly claimed that they have always a special and spiritual meaning. The table is herewith subjoined. It will be seen that in some passages it is difficult to determine whether the use belongs to the literal or to the spiritual ; in such cases the word will be found given on both sides.

¹ See Chapter II, pp. 49–53.

'Απόλλυμι

Apollumi

LITERAL USES.

To destroy.

Seek the young child to destroy him.—Matt. ii. 13.

Able to destroy both body and soul in hell.—Matt. x. 28.

Took counsel . . . how they might destroy Him.—Matt. xii. 14; cf. Mark iii. 6, xi. 18; Luke xix. 47.

He will miserably destroy those wicked men.—Matt. xxi. 21, 41; cf. Mark xii. 9, Luke xx. 16.

He sent his armies and destroyed those murderers.—Matt. xxii. 7.

They should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.—Matt. xxvii. 20.

Art thou come to destroy us?—Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34.

Into the fire and into the waters to destroy him.—Mark ix. 22.

To do good or to do harm? To save life or to destroy it?—Luke vi. 9.

Not to destroy men's lives but to save them.—Luke ix. 56 (Marg.).

The flood came and destroyed them all.—Luke. xvii. 27.

SPIRITUAL USES.

To destroy.

Able to destroy both body and soul in hell.—Matt. x. 28.

Not to destroy men's lives but to save them.—Luke ix. 56 (Marg.).

Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.—Rom. xiv. 15.

Lawgiver and Judge . . . able to save and to destroy.—James iv. 12.

Ἀπολλύμι

Apollumi

LITERAL USES.

SPIRITUAL USES.

To destroy.

To destroy.

Fire from Heaven and destroyed them all.—Luke xvii. 29.

That he may steal and kill and destroy.—John x. 10.

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.—1 Cor. i. 19.

Forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed.—2 Cor. iv. 9.

To die.

That one man shall die for the people.—John xviii. 14.

To perish.

That one of thy members should perish.—Matt. v. 29, 30.

Awoke Him, saying, Save, Lord, we perish.—Matt. viii. 25 ; Mark iv. 38.

The wine is spilled and the skins perish.—Matt. ix. 17 ; Luke v. 37.

The wine perisheth and the skins.—Mark ii. 22.

They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.—Matt. xxvi. 52.

Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.—Luke xi. 51.

To perish.

That one of these little ones should perish.—Matt. xviii. 14.

Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.—Luke xiii. 3.

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.—Luke xiii. 5.

Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish.—John iii. 16.

They shall never perish, and no one shall snatch.—John x. 28.

Sinned without law shall also perish without law.—Rom. ii. 12.

'Απόλλυμι

Apollumi

LITERAL USES.

To perish.

Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.—Luke xiii. 3.

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.—Luke xiii. 5.

That a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.—Luke xiii. 33.

Enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger.—Luke xv. 17.

Not a hair of your head shall perish.—Luke xxi. 18.

Work not for the meat which perisheth.—John vi. 27.

And that the whole nation perish not.—John xi. 50.

Judas of Galilee . . . he also perished.—Acts v. 37.

Some of them perished by the destroyer.—1 Cor. x. 10.

Tempted and perished by the serpents.—1 Cor. x. 9.

Then they also which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.—1 Cor. xv. 18.

They shall perish, but Thou continuest.—Heb. i. 11.

SPIRITUAL USES.

To perish.

Not one of them perished, but the son of perdition.—John xvii. 12.

Cross is to them that are perishing foolishness.—1 Cor. i. 18.

Through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth.—1 Cor. viii. 11.

Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.—1 Cor. xv. 18.

That are being saved, and in them that are perishing.—2 Cor. ii. 15.

It is veiled in them that are perishing.—2 Cor. iv. 3.

Deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing.—2 Thess. ii. 10.

Not wishing that any should perish.—2 Peter iii. 9.

'Ἀπόλλυμι

Apollumi

LITERAL USES.

SPIRITUAL USES.

To perish.

The grace of the fashion of it perisheth.—James i. 11.

More precious than gold which perisheth.—1 Peter i. 7.

Being overflowed with water, perished.—2 Peter iii. 6.

Perished in the gain-saying of Korah.—Jude i. 11.

To lose.

He shall in no wise lose his reward.—Matt. x. 42 ; Mark ix. 41.

A hundred sheep, and having lost one of them.—Luke xv. 4.

And go after that which is lost until he find it.—Luke xv. 4.

I have found my sheep which was lost.—Luke xv. 6.

If she lose one piece, doth not light a candle?—Luke xv. 8.

I have found the piece which I had lost.—Luke xv. 9.

This my son . . . was lost and is found.—Luke xv. 24.

*To perish.**To lose.*

He that findeth his life shall lose it.—Matt. x. 39.

He that loseth his life . . . shall find it.—Matt. x. 39 ; cf. Mark viii. 35, Luke ix. 24, Luke xvii. 33.

Gain the whole world and lose or forfeit his own self.—Luke ix. 25.

Came to seek and save that which was lost.—Luke xix. 10.

Of all . . . He hath given Me, I should lose nothing.—John vi. 39.

He that loveth his life loseth it.—John xii. 25.

'Απόλλυμι

Apollumi

LITERAL USES.

SPIRITUAL USES.

*To lose.**To lose.*

This thy brother . . .
was lost and is found.—
Luke xv. 32.

Broken pieces that re-
main over that nothing be
lost.—John vi. 12.

Ἀπώλεια

*Apōleia**Destruction.**Destruction.*

Broad is the way that
leadeth to destruction.—
Matt. vii. 13.

Vessels of wrath, fitted
unto destruction.—Rom.
ix. 22.

Bringing upon themselves
swift destruction.—2 Peter
ii. 1.

And their destruction
slumbereth not.—2 Peter
ii. 3.

The day of judgment and
destruction of ungodly men.
—2 Peter iii. 7.

The . . . unsteadfast
wrest . . . unto their own
destruction.—2 Peter iii.
16.

*Perdition.**Perdition.*

Not one . . . perished but
the son of perdition.—John
xvii. 12.

For them an evident token
of perdition.—Phil. i. 28.

Ἀπώλεια

Ἀπόλεια

LITERAL USES.

SPIRITUAL USES.

*Perdition.**Perdition.*

Whose end is perdition,
whose god is the belly.—
Phil. iii. 19.

The man of sin be re-
vealed, the son of perdi-
tion.—2 Thess. ii. 3.

Drown men in destruction
and perdition.—1 Tim. vi. 9.

Of them that shrink back
unto perdition.—Heb. x. 39.

Up out of the abyss and
to go into perdition.—Rev.
xvii. 8.

Is of the seven; and he
goeth into perdition.—Rev.
xvii. 11.

Shall privily bring in
sects¹ of perdition.—2 Peter
ii. 1 (Marg.)

Perish.

Thy silver perish with
thee.—Acts viii. 20.

Waste.

To what purpose is this
waste?—Matt. xxvi. 8;
Mark xiv. 4.

Ὁλεθρος

Olethros

Destruction.

To deliver . . . unto
Satan for the destruction
of the flesh.—1 Cor. v. 5.

Destruction.

Then sudden destruction
cometh upon them.—
1 Thess. v. 3.

Punishment, even eternal

¹ In the text R.V. has "destructive heresies."

Ὀλεθρος

LITERAL USES.

Destruction.

Ὀλοθρεύτης (*Olothreutes*)
Ἐξολοθρεύω

Destroy.

Some of them perished by the destroyer.—1 Cor. x. 10.

The destroyer of the first born should not touch them.—Heb. xi. 28.

Διαφθείρω

Destroy.

The third part of the ships were destroyed.—Rev. viii. 9.

To destroy them that destroy the earth.—Rev. xi. 18.

Neither moth destroyeth.—Luke xii. 33.

Decay.

Though our outward man is decaying.—2 Cor. iv. 16.

Corrupt.

Οlethros

SPIRITUAL USES.

Destruction.

destruction from the face of the Lord.—2 Thess. i. 9.

Drown men in destruction and perdition.—1 Tim. vi. 9.

Ὀλοθρεύω (*Olothreuo*)
(Ἐξολοθρεύω) (*Exolothreuo*)

Utterly destroyed.

Shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.—Acts iii. 23.

Διαφθείρω

Destroy.

To destroy them that destroy the earth.—Rev. xi. 18.

*Decay.**Corrupt.*

Wrangling of men corrupted in mind.—1 Tim. vi. 5.

Which did corrupt the earth with her fornication.—Rev. xix. 2.

Φθείρω

LITERAL USES.

Destroy.

If any man destroy the temple of God him shall God destroy.—1 Cor. iii. 17.

Corrupt.

Phtheiro

SPIRITUAL USES.

Destroy.

If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy.—1 Cor. iii. 17.

In these things are they destroyed.—Jude 10.

Corrupt.

Evil company doth corrupt good manners.—1 Cor. xv. 33.

We corrupted no man.—2 Cor. vii. 2.

Lest your minds should be corrupted.—2 Cor. xi. 3.

The old man which waxeth corrupt.—Eph. iv. 22.

is doomed to perish (w).

In these things are they corrupted.—Jude 10 (Marg.)

Καταφθείρω

Destroy.

Kataphtheiro

Destroy.

Shall in their destroying surely be destroyed.—2 Peter ii. 12.

Διαφθώρα

Corruption.

Thine Holy One to see corruption.—Acts ii. 27.

Neither His flesh did see corruption.—Acts ii. 32.

No more to return to corruption.—Acts xiii. 34.

Diaphthora

Corruption.

Διαφθόρα

LITERAL USES.

Corruption.

Thine Holy One to see
corruption.—Acts xiii. 35.

David . . . fell on sleep
. . . and saw corruption.—
Acts xiii. 36.

He, whom God raised
again, saw no corruption.—
Acts xiii. 37.

Diaphthora

SPIRITUAL USES.

Corruption.

In thus studying an exhaustive table of the New Testament usage of a word, it will be observable at the outset that a word has first a primary or radical meaning, and then secondary meanings developed from and arising out of the primary meaning. This is apparent from the different English words which are used for its translation. And, further, it will appear that primary and secondary meanings alike are used either in a literal sense or in a spiritual. And here again the literal meaning will give the key to the spiritual, for it supplies the underlying sense out of which its application to the spiritual sphere has arisen.

PRIMARY meaning of *apollumi* is to *destroy*; (mid.)
to *perish*.

To destroy = to end life }
To perish = to lose life } in the case of animate beings.

To destroy = to bring to an end
to cause to cease to be }
To perish = to come to an end } in the case
to cease to be } of inanimate
things.

SECONDARY meaning of *apollumi* is to *lose*; (pass.)
to *be lost*.

To lose = to suffer the disappearance of.

To be lost = to disappear.

PRIMARY = *Termination* of life (animate).

„ of purpose served (inanimate).

SECONDARY = *Termination* of presence (of person or
thing).

The sense of termination is always therefore discoverable in the use of the word, whether its meaning is primary or secondary. Hence the spiritual meaning, derived from and arising out of the literal, will always convey the sense of termination. Thus the spiritual meaning of 'destroy,' 'perish,' the final doom of the wicked of which the Word speaks, must mean the ultimate termination of life, not its endless perpetuation under suffering, however great, nor its continuance in banishment and alienation from God. If it be objected that 'to be lost' spiritually conveys no thought of termination, we reply that this is only because the phrase has gained a stereotyped religious usage which has obscured its original and literal sense. To lose life is to have life cease: to lose a sheep is for the owner's possession of that sheep to cease, at least for the time being, through its disappearance. A glance back at the table will show that this thought is predominant in the literal uses of 'to lose,' 'to be lost.' Again, a survey of the table will make it readily apparent that the way to find the true key to the spiritual meaning of a word will be to take the passages (if any) in which its use is applied at one and the same time to the physical or literal realm and to the spiritual. And this method brings us at once to the passages which we have put forward in Chapter II as giving a self-evidencing interpretation of the spiritual meaning of the words 'destroy,' 'perish,' on the lips alike of our Lord and Peter, viz. Matthew x. 28; Luke xiii. 3, 5; Acts viii. 20. Our Lord speaks of God's ability to destroy soul as well as body in Gehenna, the bodily destruction being obviously and actually dissolution. Again, He likens the doom of the wicked to a case of cruel murder and to another of fatal accident, while Peter's curse on Simon Magus is that his soul may share the fate of his money. Paul's key (1 Cor. xv. 18), though not found thus in a combined use of literal and spiritual, is equally self-evidencing, for he speaks of the dead in Christ as perishing if there be no resurrection, showing that by 'perish' he means final dissolution. The unfortunate

thing about the words in our English Bible, 'perish,' 'perdition,' is that through their constant association with the tradition of endless torment in hell they now tend to veil from us, if not altogether to hide, their true and natural meaning of ultimate obliteration of life. Allow this key to unlock their true meaning, and at once the passages will be found to become wonderfully luminous. And when this key is used as a test to try the other Greek words applied to the doom of the wicked, it will be found to hold good in every case. If the primary meaning of *apollumi* is 'to end life,'—'to make an end of'—so equally will it be found in the case of every one of the other words that the radical or primary meaning is either 'to bring to an end' or to subject to a process which eventuates in dissolution and disintegration. Is it *olethros*? The unworthy Corinthian Christian is handed over to Satan by the Apostle for "the destruction of the flesh." What is this for but the termination of his physical life by some physical affliction or stroke? Is it the derivatives of *olethros*? The same radical meaning of the termination of life will be found in each case. Is it *phtheiro*, of which we seek the primary meaning? In this case it is physical decay which terminates in physical dissolution, and its compounds *diaphtheiro*, *kataphtheiro*, only express either the hastening or the completion of the process, and from this naturally follows the secondary meaning of moral decay which also brings death in its train. The thought of ultimate dissolution, disintegration, of the cessation of life where animate beings are in question, lies at the root of every one of these words, and is involved in its primary signification. How is it possible, then, to avoid the conclusion that this ultimate termination of life is the true and correct interpretation of the terms when applied to the punishment of the lost, which itself, be it remembered, is commonly in Scripture spoken of as death?

It will be well, however, to examine with patience and care statements which have been put forward in defence of the doctrine of endless conscious suffering as being

the correct interpretation of Scripture in reference to the final punishment of the lost. One of the very best of the religious magazines on the American continent, writing not long since in defence of the endless-conscious-suffering doctrine, thus comments on 2 Thessalonians i. 9.

"It is to be noted that the word 'destruction,' as used in the Bible over and over again, never means annihilation or the blotting out of existence."

(And then follows this quotation, from an unnamed authority, given in inverted commas.)

"The term destruction denotes ruin, but does not define the form of the ruin, it signifies to pull down—to separate a whole into its parts, or to reduce to disorder—to change the mode of existence, so as to disqualify that which is destroyed from its original purpose." Thus the land (of Egypt) was destroyed by flies (Exod. viii. 24). But Egypt remains to this day. Again, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself" (Hos. xiii. 9). Yet Israel is the one indestructible nation among all nations. And again, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 19). Jesus could not possibly mean annihilation. Other passages similarly. ("Sunday School Times," April 13, 1918, p. 206.)

Now the writer here is very seriously at fault in three different particulars. For (1) he puts into the mouths of those whose doctrine he condemns a word which they do not use, 'annihilation,' but which they expressly repudiate, as not truly representing their position. It would give the idea that the wicked on being cast into the Lake of Fire there and then instantly cease to be. And this the "Sunday School Times" seems to imply when it states our position thus: "Some have sought to show that the unending punishment which God's Word declares is to be the condition of the unsaved is not conscious punishment, but that the unsaved cease to exist and are annihilated. This, again, is an unscriptural position." Now it has been already pointed out above (Chap. V) that the illustration of "being cast into outer darkness

where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth " distinctly implies conscious suffering for an undefined term. But that equally the great majority of illustrations involve and imply that the punishment issues in extinction of life. Now this is far removed from an instant cessation of existence, which the " Sunday School Times " appears to mean by the term annihilation. I have not read many writers on my own side of the question, but I have never yet heard of one who asserts that the final doom of the wicked is instant extinction of life. But those I have read repudiate as strongly as I do the assertion or the implication that this is what we teach ; and thus it is unfair to endeavour to fasten on us the term annihilation, unless it be made perfectly clear that what we stand for is a punishment which—after how long a time Scripture does not say—eventually issues in dissolution of the whole man.

Further, the word ' annihilated ' suggests the destruction, the obliteration if that were possible, of the particles of the substance spoken of. Hence to put this term into our lips is to raise an entirely irrelevant and unfair issue ; what we are contending for as the true scriptural meaning of ' destroy ' is not obliteration of substance, but obliteration of life, a very different thing.

2. The second grave weakness of the " Sunday School Times " is that the writer argues from the English word ' destroy,' and that the instances he gives are of four different Greek words, two being in the New Testament and two in the LXX translation of the Old Testament. They are *olethros*, 2 Thessalonians i. 9 ; *exolothreuo* in Exodus viii. 24 ; *diaphthora* in Hosea xiii. 9 ; and *luo* in John ii. 19. Of these, *luo* is never used in the New Testament of the doom of the lost ; hence its use in John ii. 9 is quite irrelevant to the argument. *Diaphthora*, as shown in the table above, is used six times in the New Testament ; never of the doom of the wicked, but in every case of the fact that Christ's body during its interment was not subject to physical decay. " He saw no corruption." The remaining two, *olethros* and *exolo-*

threuo, are used in the New Testament of the doom of the wicked. But they are only found, whether in primary or secondary meanings, five times in the New Testament (for which see the table given above), whereas the common word is *apollumi*, which is found in the New Testament eighty-five times, with its cognate *apōleia* nineteen times, or a hundred and four times in all. It is a strange blunder to quote *luo* (lit. to loose, to undo, hence to pull down) in this connection. It is a still stranger omission to make no reference to *apollumi*, or its cognate noun *apōleia*.

3. But the third error is the most serious of all. The writer endeavours to interpret the meaning of the verb 'destroy' not from its uses in its primary signification, but from its secondary use, e.g. Egypt destroyed by flies, and Israel's self-destruction. What confusion results will at once be seen by taking the definitions which he gives of the verb 'destroy' and applying them to *apollumi* in its primary uses. These definitions are :—

To pull down.

To separate a whole into its parts.

To reduce to disorder.

To change the mode of existence so as to disqualify that which is destroyed from its original purpose.

We will apply them in rotation to some of the primary uses of *apollumi* as given above, and note the result :—

Seek the young child to pull him down.

Able to separate body and soul into their respective parts in hell.

Took . . . counsel how they might reduce him to disorder.

He will miserably change the mode of existence of those wicked men, so as to disqualify them from their original purpose.

Again,

He sent his armies and pulled down those murderers.

Art thou come to separate our wholes into their respective parts ?

Into the fire and waters to reduce him to disorder.

That he may steal and kill and change the mode of existence so as to disqualify his victims from serving their original purpose.

And so we might continue. Our readers must themselves be the judges how it fares with the doctrine of eternal torment, when sound principles of Scripture exegesis are brought to bear upon its defences. We have taken the definitions offered of the word 'destroy,' and replacing the word by its definition find that it lands us in absurdity. The reason is that stated above; the attempt to interpret the primary meaning of a word from observance of its secondary or derived uses is a complete subversion of the well-known law of language (use the primary meaning of a word as the key wherewith to unlock its secondary and derived meanings), and the subversion can only end in disaster.

We cannot do better than close this chapter with the severe but just words of one whom all will acknowledge to have been a master of the subject of the Greek of the New Testament, the late Dr. Weymouth.

"My mind fails to conceive a grosser misrepresentation of language than when five or six of the strongest words which the Greek tongue possesses, signifying destroy or destruction, are explained to mean maintaining an everlasting but wretched existence."—*Dr. Weymouth.*

But here the objection may be raised, Does it not appear from your own list given above that *apōleia* in its primary meaning is never found in the New Testament of the destruction of physical life but only of spiritual? And does that not weaken your contention that this destruction means and involves the termination of life?

To this we gladly reply: (i) Let it be remembered that the spiritual doom of the wicked, of which *apōleia* is used, is a destruction of body as well as of soul. "Fear Him," said our Lord, "who is able to destroy (*apolesai*) both body and soul in Gehenna." (ii) And to make this

interpretation doubly sure, Peter, speaking of the doom of the false teachers (ch. ii. 1) as destruction (*apōleia*), likens that doom a few verses later (v. 12) to that of natural brute beasts, born for capture and slaughter (Gk. *phthora*).¹ (iii) It would be strange indeed if a verbal noun like *apōleia* should be radically different in meaning from the primary meaning of its verb. (iv) Moreover, both noun and verb are used in such close proximity together in 2 Peter iii. that it is impossible to doubt that the literal physical meaning is typical and suggestive of the spiritual.

"The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished (Gk. *apōleto*) ; but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction (Gk. *apōleias*) of ungodly men. . . . The Lord . . . is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish (Gk. *apolesthai*), but that all should come to repentance."—2 Peter iii. 6, 7, 9 (R.V.).

And that Peter is speaking of the doom of living men in the waters of the flood is acknowledged by Dr. Scofield, who in a marginal note to the word 'world' (v.6.) writes "Kosmos (Matt. iv. 8) =mankind."

Thus we see that the apostle's inspired view is that if God's awful judgment on that earlier age was death by water, in the more awful day to come His judgment will be death by fire. Comparing this prospect of doom with that, what a scene of unspeakably awful reality it unfolds ! Well indeed has the apostle written :—

"Seeing that these things" (wicked men included, see v. 9) "are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness ?"—2 Peter iii. 11.

¹ See above, pp. 141-2.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAKE OF FIRE

WE come now to the last book of the Bible, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him," to learn what it has to say on the final destiny of the righteous and the wicked. And here let us remember that while it is a book mysterious and difficult, full of visions, some interpreted for us and others not, yet—and perhaps indeed just because of this difficulty—it has incorporated in it, as no other book of the Bible has, a promise both at the beginning and the end for him who reads and those that hear and keep the words of this prophecy.

And we may perhaps find the keynote of the book and of its visions and glories in some of the opening words of our Lord Himself, who in person gave not a few of its messages to His aged apostle. He bids him :—

"Fear not: I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades."—Rev. i. 18 (R.V.).

Here then we note at the outset that Christ Himself, the Resurrection and the Life, uses the words 'life' and 'living' in their simple and natural meaning—in contrast and antithesis to the death through which He passed for us. "I was dead, and am alive for evermore." And this book rings with the note of life from first to last. The tree of life (ii. 7), the crown of life (ii. 10), the book of life (iii. 5), all are named by Christ in His messages to the seven churches as among the rewards waiting for His 'overcomers' within the churches. The tree of life

and the water of life are twice named in the course of the book, and the book of life is named seven times over. Thus the unveiling of the glorious future that awaits the redeemed, rings, let us repeat it, with the significant and triumphant note of life, life for evermore. Well may we with the aged seer of Patmos fall down and worship Him who is the Living One. Well may we join the Apostle Paul in his expectant note of triumph, "When Christ, who is Our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

We will now set out in full the references which this book contains to the doom of the wicked :—

"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."—Ch. ii. 11.

"I will kill her children with death."—Ch. ii. 23.

"Thy wrath is come and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants, . . . and that Thou shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

—Ch. xi. 18.

The two latter need not detain us, for it is quite likely that they speak of the wrath of God manifested in this life, whether on false professors within Christ's Church or on followers of the Antichrist in premillennial judgment.

The first passage, however, brings us at once in view of the lake of fire, which in ch. xx. is stated to be the second death, and to which all the remaining references apply, which are now subjoined.

Ch. xiv. 9-11. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb : and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever : and they have no rest day nor night, who

worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

Ch. xvii. 8, 11. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

Ch. xix. 20. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Ch. xx. 10-15. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Ch. xxi. 7-8. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake

which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death."

Ch. xxii. 14-15. "Blessed *are* they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

We are now face to face with what may be reckoned to be the supreme stronghold in Scripture of the endless torment theory, buttressed upon the words "everlasting punishment" in Matthew xxv. 46. Let us examine it with the utmost candour ; for our sole standing ground is the word of God, and what we find there, unmistakably revealed, that we accept as the holy will of God ; and whatever in that revealed will may appear to conflict with our reason or conscience, that we bow to, knowing our human infirmity of judgment, our inability to see the end from the beginning as God sees it, and perfectly confident that if there be anything revealed in His word which would naturally cause us to stumble now, we can safely leave it to Him to justify when we see Him face to face, and shall know as we are known.

In the first passage above quoted (ch. xiv. 9-11) we have three statements regarding the worshippers of the beast and their doom. They are to be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the angels and of the Lamb, the smoke of their torment ascendeth to the ages ; and they have no rest day nor night. Now here we note, first, that it is a special class spoken of, a class whose guilt is exceptional, for they were the active followers of the Antichrist. We are going then beyond what is divinely revealed if we assume that all the wicked dead will suffer in the same measure or to the same length. Indeed, the introductory words, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out *without mixture* into the cup of His indignation," would seem to suggest that their punishment is to be excep-

tionally severe. Of the three statements concerning this punishment, two appear to relate to its length, and *prima facie* to suggest endless suffering, but under a careful analysis it will be observed that it is not their torment which is said to continue to the ages of the ages, but the smoke of their torment; and it has been well said that "smoke, which is a formless relic of that which has been decomposed by fire, must be an emblem of the remembrance left by the object destroyed; a perpetual smoke is the ineffaceable remembrance of an irreparable destruction." And that this is the true interpretation is made certain for us by the Book of Revelation itself, which may be expected to be the best interpreter of its own figures; for the same words are used of Babylon, that "her smoke rose up for ever and ever"¹ This cannot mean that Babylon was to suffer the fate of an endless burning, for to represent her doom of actual obliteration it is written that "a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city of Babylon be thrown down, *and shall be found no more at all.*"² If then Babylon was thus to be wiped out, and yet her smoke continued to arise, it is plain that the smoke can only represent the memory of her burning. And if so with Babylon, so also with the worshippers of the beast. But it will be replied—the latter are said to have no respite from their suffering day nor night, and this surely betokens endless torment. On the contrary, the very words 'day nor night' confine the limit of the suffering to time—in eternity there will be neither day nor night; for when the first heaven and the first earth are passed away, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and in the new Jerusalem which will then descend out of heaven we are expressly told, and twice told, "There shall be no night there,"³ also that "the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."⁴

¹ Ch. xix. 3. ² Ch. xviii. 21. ³ Ch. xxi. 25; xxii. 5. ⁴ Ch. xxi. 23.

Thus the Book of Revelation itself forbids us to interpret these words to mean endless conscious suffering. And it will not be forgotten that above in Chapter VI we saw that this passage in Revelation bears a very close verbal similarity to the doom foretold by Isaiah as to come upon Edom, in which, though the language in English seems to involve an endless condition of burning, yet this interpretation is precluded by the immediate context.¹ Thus Scripture itself undeniably authorizes us to interpret these words regarding the lake of fire as applying to a terminable condition.

The next two passages given above (ch. xvii. 8-11 and ch. xix. 20) deal with the fate of the beast and the false prophet. At the outset it is worthy of note, and able commentators have drawn attention to it, that in the devil, the beast and the false prophet we have a *Satanic trinity*, an awful diabolic counterfeit it would seem of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The special characteristic of the false prophet is that he works miracles, counterfeiting thus the gifts of the Spirit, while the title of the beast, the Antichrist, means, not an opponent of Christ, but a spurious Christ. In this very passage the startling fact of his resurrection is pressed, and, like Christ, he will have both his ascension and his return, for the Greek reads, he 'was and is not and is about to ascend from the abyss,' and again, he 'was and is not and shall come again' (Gk. *parestai*; more literally, he shall be present; the verb being that from which the verbal noun '*parousia*' is formed, the word frequently used of Christ's return, meaning literally His 'presence' upon earth). In contrast to this return to earth, twice it is pointedly stated that the beast 'goeth into perdition,' literally, he departeth unto destruction.² And we have already seen above in Chapter VIII that this word 'destruction,' like the verb from which it is derived, when spoken of animate beings must imply termination of life. And here the obvious contrast consists in this, that though the Antichrist is able to return to life, yet that life shall be de-

¹ See pp. 125-6.

² Gk. *hupagei eis apōleian*.

stroyed. If this contrast is not so apparent to the English reader, it is simply because, through the traditional conception of the immortality of the soul and the consequent dogma of endless life in hell, the word 'perdition' has come in religious parlance to represent a fate of ceaseless suffering therein.

Chapter xx. 10 tells us that at the close of the millennium the devil himself will join his comrades in their fiery doom, where they have been since the thousand years commenced, and that then the three will be tormented day and night unto the ages of the ages. In this the upholders of the endless torment theory find a welcome proof of their theory; but in so doing they overlook no less than four facts compelling us to write 'not proven' against it, besides a fifth possibility which also tells against them. For (1) as above seen, the beast himself 'departeth unto destruction'—a fact twice emphasized. (2) The terms 'day and night' show that their fate is confined to the span of Time, and does not pass over into the great Eternity, when day and night have ceased. (3) Under our study of *aiōn* we have found that the phrase 'to the ages of the ages' is certainly used of periods that have a limit, and hence we are precluded from claiming that it must here be spoken of an endless eternity of punishment. (4) If the case of the followers of the beast, dealt with above, is a special one, so that from it we cannot argue the doom of the multitudes tried and condemned at the Great White Throne, still more is this true of the devil, and of their leaders the beast and the false prophet; and there remains certainly the possibility (5) that these junior members of the Satanic trinity are not human beings at all, but are—be it very reverently said—counterfeits of Christ and the Holy Spirit, in a word, that they are demonic incarnations, albeit with this difference, that while the Spirit of God dwells incarnate in every living member of Christ, the false prophet would seem to be a single individual in whom the spirit of evil finds his special habitation. If it be replied that evil spirits are indestructible, we reply, Not so; did not

a demon in addressing Christ ask, Art Thou come to destroy us? using the word *apollumi*, involving termination of life (Mark i. 24)? And relative to the third point (3), it is of the deepest interest to find that so thoroughly evangelical a writer as Edersheim, convinced though he declares himself to be that endless torment has more Scripture on its side than any other theory, nevertheless finds himself acknowledging that it may possibly be that the true conclusion lies in that which we have advanced above, viz. that the punishment of the wicked may be cœval with the bounds of time, and may cease when the Son hands over the Kingdom to the Father. Regarding the claim that "the term *aiōnios* and kindred expressions always refer to eternity in the strict sense," he writes:—

"Of this I cannot express myself convinced,¹ although the balance of evidence is in favour of such meaning. But it is at least conceivable that the expressions might refer to the end of all time, and the merging of the 'mediatorial regency' (1 Cor. xv. 24) in the absolute kingship of God."

Moreover, for both parties to this controversy whether the sufferings of the wicked will be endless in duration or limited, it is surely well to bear in mind that as soon as we leave the bounds of Time, and are speaking of Eternity, we are in a sphere which transcends our present finite ken. It has been surmised, possibly if not probably with truth, that Eternity means entrance into life of a fourth dimension. Should this be so, it is easy to understand that conditions in Eternity are as much beyond our grasp as our present world would be to a creature of two dimensions. Both time and space—we shall probably find—are eliminated in Eternity: but in any case, its conditions of being are certainly so far beyond our present grasp, that to argue about them beyond what is revealed is not our province. It might be asked—But does not this reflection cut the ground from under your

¹ Here Edersheim gives reference to New Testament lexicons.

own feet in arguing for a limited duration of final punishment for the wicked? We answer, Not so, unless Scripture be found to declare that man himself is an essentially deathless being, or that his life under punishment will be prolonged as long as God is God. We have not found such a declaration yet: has our reader?

The final passages to be considered in the Book of Revelation (ch. xx. 11-15; ch. xxi. 7, 8; ch. xxii. 14, 15) deal with the judgment of the great white throne and its result. The sentence of condemnation there passed on those whose names were not found written in the book of life is to have their portion in the lake of fire, which is "the second death" (v. 14). That the true interpretation of the phrase 'the second death' involves termination of life, we have argued above, in Chapter IV, which deals with the terms 'life' and 'death' as appearing in Scripture. But apart from this, and apart also from the Scripture evidence which we have already found along other lines, establishing—in the judgment of the writer—that the doom of the wicked issues in ultimate dissolution and obliteration, it is here further submitted that the same conclusion is directly deducible from plain statements of the closing chapters of this wonderful Apocalypse. For when the new heaven and the new earth appear, a divine voice from the throne declares that "death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more; the first things are passed away."¹ But it is urged, on the other side, 'this is spoken only of the new Jerusalem; and the lost are still found outside, as appears from verse 8 of chapter xxi., and still more clearly from chapter xxii. 14, 15, which are the two closing passages given above. The former passage gives a list of those who have their part in the lake of fire; and the latter, after promising the tree of life and right of entrance to the city to the obedient, declares that the unholy of all kinds are outside, i.e. are still in existence outside the new Jerusalem.' A close attention to the context will, however, show that in

¹ Rev. xxi. 4 (R.V.).

neither case is this a fair interpretation, for in neither case do the words form part of the narrative by the seer or of a description of his vision.

In chapter xxi. the vision of the new Jerusalem occupies the first four verses. Then follow messages from Him that sat upon the throne, and the message contained in verses 6-8 is for those living upon earth in the gospel day, words of invitation, "I will give unto him that is athirst," words of promise, "he that overcometh shall inherit all things . . ." and finally a word of warning, "but the fearful and the unbelieving . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

So also in chapter xxii. the words, "without are dogs,"¹ are found not in the descriptive narrative of the new Jerusalem and its blessedness, but they are an after-message, sent once more by the Saviour Himself through His apostle to those to whom John is writing. And it will be noted by the English reader that in the A.V. the word 'are'—"without are dogs"—is in italics, showing that it is not in the original Greek. Following on the promise of the tree of life to those who are now obedient, the natural tense to supply the hiatus is not a present but a future; 'Blessed are the obedient, for the tree of life shall be theirs. But the unholy will be outside, the tree of life and the holy city are not for them.'

If the lake of fire is co-existent with the new Jerusalem, only outside it, how can it be truly said by our Christ Himself concerning that glad day that "death shall be no more"?² And how then would it be true that "the first things are passed away"?² And what does it mean that death and Hades themselves are "cast into the lake of fire"?³ What can this mean but a final obliteration of all trace of death and the prison-house? And how can it be truly said that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed" (R.V. abolished) "is death,"⁴ if in reality the second death, the lake of fire, is to last for ever and ever as long as God is God, and as long as the redeemed

¹ Rev. xxii. 15. ² Rev. xxi. 4. ³ Rev. xx. 14. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 26.

survive in bliss? And if the wicked dead survive for ever in sin and in torment, how can it be truly said of that glad eternity to come that "There shall be no more curse"¹ (Rev. xxii. 3)? And which is the truer picture of the glorious goal when God shall be all in all, a new heaven and a new earth with the lake of fire for ever co-existent outside, the lost souls suffering for ever and for ever in their sins, or the new heaven and the new earth in which all is new, when all the former things are passed away, when sin and Satan and sorrow and death are for ever gone? Which, as we cast our eye back and review the evidence, is the more true to Scripture, death and sin which abide, or death and sin which pass away?

Let us look at this triumphant statement in 1 Cor. xv. a little more closely:—

"Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till he hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death . . . and when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."—1 Cor. xv. 24–28.

Now, according to the theory of endless conscious suffering, the lake of fire is to continue for ever, and the wicked will be for ever alive in torment. This, under that theory, is the second death. If this be so, what is this but death eternally present and eternally active? Yet Scripture tells us (Rev. xx. 14) that death itself, as well as Hades, was cast into the lake of fire. And here (1 Cor. xv. 26) that death is abrogated, annulled, rendered inoperative.² How then does the theory harmonize with

¹ The Greek makes this clearer still: "*pan katathēma ouk estai eti.*" : literally, "everything accursed shall be no longer," or, yet more literally, "all curse shall be no longer."

² The Greek word here is *Katargeitai*. This word is derived from the preposition *kata*, implying thoroughness, and *a-* without, *ergon*, work. Hence it means to destroy in the sense of "to put out of action." It is used also in Rom. vi. 6, and Heb. ii. 14.

these Scriptures? Again, we have the glorious goal set before us that after the abolition of the last enemy, death, God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28), literally, God will be everything in everybody. Bengel's beautiful comment on this is "All creatures will say, 'God is everything to me.'" Is it believable that this will be the utterance of those whose souls and bodies are burning in the lake of fire? It is argued that they must remain there because their sin is endless: their hearts will for ever be rebellious and hostile to God; this is the theory. Will the day come then when God will be everything to them, when God will be everything in them? The irrationality of the conclusion shows that the holders of the theory have somehow misread Scripture, to be landed in such a result as this.

Here then we find that the Book of Revelation gives the capstone to all our conclusions previously and independently drawn from other Scriptures; and bids us understand that however long and however terrible may be the sufferings of the guiltiest, whether man or devil, in the lake of fire, those sufferings will have a termination. This is the second death, and death itself will cease to be.

The great glad day will come when the finally impenitent will have perished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord: all sin and sorrow, suffering and death will have for ever passed away, and God will be ALL IN ALL. To Him be the glory to the ages of the ages! Amen.

Before closing our survey of scriptural references to the final judgment of the ungodly, and now that we have seen in the apocalyptic vision the casting of the wicked dead and of death itself and Hades into the lake of fire, followed by the emergence of new heavens and a new earth, let us glance at the prophetic utterance of Peter on the same subject in the closing chapter of his second epistle.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the

fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished : but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness ; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of *persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—2 Peter iii. 3-13.

Here the apostle, carrying our memories back to the world judgment of the flood, tells us that our present heavens and earth await another judgment, that of fire, in which not only shall the ungodly perish but the heavens shall pass away, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up, giving place to new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Comparing this with Revelation xx., xxi., the thought cannot but suggest itself that the lake of fire may be the fire now situated in the heart of the earth, and that the final conflagration will be due to the bursting forth of

those flames which the Lord is now graciously keeping pent up, waiting for that awful judgment day. If this be so, how harmonious with the conclusion to which Scripture has already shut us up, viz. that the ultimate end of the wicked will be to pass away, and that all trace of death and of a prison-house, as also all traces of sin and its fruit upon this sin-cursed earth, will disappear, giving place to a realm in which all shall be joy and peace and love and life, for God shall be supreme. That will be the day when all things shall be headed up in Christ, when all things shall be reconciled to God, and when the Son, Lamb of God to the end, in His perfect humility shall be subject to Him that put all things under Him, bringing us to that goal of unspeakable blessedness when God shall be all in all.

Here, indeed, is a consummation of the purpose of the ages, worthy of our God and of His Christ.

CHAPTER X

OUR CASE AND ITS OPPONENTS

G LANCING back over the road that we have travelled, in our endeavour to learn what Scripture teaches regarding both the nature and the destiny of man, let us now summarize the results. These results, be it noted, have been obtained by inductive study which has sought to be exhaustive, as indeed all inductive study must be, if it is to obtain a sure result.

Those studies have been in the New Testament mainly, rather than in the Old, because the unfolding of the revelation of what lies beyond the grave waited in the wisdom of God for the advent upon earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by His death and resurrection abolished death and brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel.

We have seen that inherent immortality is the possession of God alone, and that the Father vouchsafed to the Son this prerogative of Godhead that He might give life to those who receive Him ; that Adam was turned by God out of Eden lest he should eat of the tree of life and live for ever ; that while the Israelites in the wilderness ate manna that fell from heaven, they died, whereas those who eat the true Bread from heaven will live for ever. Again, that immortality awaits the righteous at the first resurrection, and is the crown and consummation of the eternal life which they possess now, born again of the Spirit through the word of the gospel ; that Christ Himself is the resurrection and the life, and that the Spirit of God dwelling in the believer is the earnest and the seal of our future immortality.

We have also seen that our Lord in speaking of the doom

of the lost recognizes the Valley of Hinnom as a fitting picture of the fiery doom of the wicked dead : that this symbol represents death accompanied by shame and horror : and that all of our Lord's illustrations, whether by parable, by examples from history, or by use of simile and metaphor, point in every single case where the inference is unmistakable, not to an endless life of loss, but to a loss of endless life,¹ a final capital punishment of soul and body. That we have similar inspired illustrations, necessitating the same conclusion, in the teachings alike of the Baptist and of Peter and Jude, most remarkable perhaps of all² being the statement of Jude that the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah was a divinely intended illustration and warning of the ' eternal fire ' that awaits the wicked consequent upon the judgment of the great white throne. And in exact harmony with the above, a study of the New Testament usage of the words translated ' destroy,' etc., in reference to the second death, establishes alike by their radical meaning and by their contextual use that they speak of a doom which terminates in ultimate dissolution ; in other words, that in using the phrase ' eternal punishment,' exactly as in ' eternal redemption ' and ' eternal judgment,' Scripture is speaking of an eternity, not of the process, but of the result, not of an endless punishing, but of a doom which is final and for evermore. And here let it be noted that this has been a strictly cumulative proof, each step being independent of the others. Immortality, the believer's reward and crown ; our Saviour's illustrations of various differing kinds ; His own direct teaching, and that of other inspired teachers and writers ; and finally, the constant terminology of Scripture on the subject, all teach the same conclusion, where any sure inference can be drawn ; separately and cumulatively, all teach that life and death

¹ I am indebted for this striking phrase to an earlier writer on the subject, whose name I cannot now recall.

² To some, perhaps, the conclusion of ultimate extinction of life will seem to be established, if possible, more clearly and certainly by the words of Peter (2 Peter ii. 12), where he likens the doom of false teachers to the end of brute beasts, born for capture and destruction.

when spoken of as the final goals of the righteous and the wicked respectively are to be understood in their natural and obvious meanings, the life being life divine in all its glorious fulness, blessedness and endlessness, while the second death is death indeed, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, at the hands of Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Gehenna. And let it be remembered that we have reached this conclusion by allowing Scripture to be its own interpreter, and that, in dependence upon our divinely given teacher as our guide and interpreter, we have found interpretations which commend themselves by their own self-evidencing power. This is surely nothing less than was to be expected by an honest seeker coming to God's word to learn His will therefrom, and with no previous conclusion to uphold—granted only, and here the reader must be judge, that the principles laid down at the outset for reaching a correct conclusion have been both truly drawn and faithfully followed.

It is time now to turn to the case offered by the defenders of the two more popular creeds as to the destiny of the impenitent, viz. (1) eternal torment, (2) ultimate restoration of all, both depending on the premiss that man is inherently an immortal being. The reader will have observed that with many of these arguments we have already dealt incidentally, in the inductive process of building up from Scripture what is to be learnt therefrom on these themes. A retrospect will show that the doctrine of man's inherent immortality rests partly on natural reasoning, partly on unwarrantable inference from the Creation narrative, in the teeth of direct Scripture evidence to the contrary. Again, the arguments drawn from such scriptural phrases as 'eternal punishment,' 'for ever and ever,' 'eternal fire,' 'unquenchable fire,' 'their worm dieth not,' we found were due sometimes to lack of thoroughness in the study of Biblical usage of such terms, sometimes to lack of attention to the original or to the context.

And again the arguments founded on the terms 'life' and

'death,' 'destroy' and 'perish,' are seen to arise from a non-natural interpretation of these terms, or to an insistence on their secondary rather than their primary meanings, both being due to the pressure (often, perhaps, quite unconscious) of the unauthorized and unscriptural axiom of the immortality of the soul.

But it will be wise and fair to put forward also our opponents' case in their own words as far as possible, and from its best expositors.

The late Bishop Moule, of Durham, in his "Outlines of Christian Doctrine," writing on the Creation narrative, names various possible conclusions as to that wherein man's creation in the image of God consisted, among them being immortality. None of these, however, satisfy him as sufficient, and the solution which he offers as seeming most comprehensive "is that the image lies in the mysterious gift of personality." And arguing that "only a true personality can be alienated from God," he continues:—

"Here too seems to lie the deepest indication in Scripture of man's *natural immortality*. We believe that immortality to be a revealed fact, taken for granted in some awful passages, where 'the second death,' the hopeless retribution on the impenitent, is seen to have no necessary tendency to cessation of being (see e.g. Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 36; Rev. xiv. 11; Rev. xx. 10-15). It seems to be indicated, not precisely, that the substance of the soul is indissoluble and therefore indestructible,¹ but that moral personality is mysteriously permanent, as God has constituted things. This seems to underlie our Lord's reasoning for the resurrection of the dead.—Matt. xxii. 31-32. He assumes for one thing the necessary ultimate coherence, so to speak, of the body and spirit in man, so that if man lives for ever his body must ultimately share that life. But He assumes also, and first, the natural permanence of the creature constitutionally

¹ This, of course, was the Platonic teaching.

capable of knowing God, of having God for 'his God.' " And then follows this footnote :—

"The question, observe, was of the resurrection, not of the saints, but of the dead. Our Lord uses words spoken of the saints as also intimating universal human facts which they presuppose."¹

From the above it will be observed that Bishop Moule finds "*the deepest indication in Scripture* of man's natural immortality" (the italics are ours), to lie in our Lord's words in Matthew xxii. 31, 32, which to him seem to indicate that "moral personality is mysteriously permanent." And from the same words he claims that Christ "assumes . . . the natural permanence of the creature constitutionally capable of knowing God" (i.e. of man); and he regards the words as "intimating universal human facts which they presuppose," i.e. man's inherent immortality.

Turning to the Scripture in question, however, we are quite at a loss to see how it can possibly bear the weight which Bishop Moule seeks thus to rest upon it. Our Lord, challenging the Sadducean denial of a resurrection of the dead, asked,

"Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

And in the parallel passage in Luke, he adds :—

"For all live unto Him."—Luke xx. 38.

Thus Christ here uses the fact that God calls Himself the God of the patriarchs who were long since dead as a proof, not of survival of the dead—that He takes for granted, "for all live unto Him"—but of resurrection. This involves, as Bishop Moule truly says, "the ultimate coherence of the body and spirit in man"; but it stops precisely short of the point which Bishop Moule seeks to

¹ "Outlines of Christian Doctrine," pp. 158-159.

deduce from it, viz. that after resurrection the good and the wicked alike will continue to live for ever. 'All men,' says our Lord, 'alive or dead, are living in God's sight, are living as regards Him'; and He gave this as a proof of the coming resurrection of all. What He did *not* say was that all after resurrection "can die no more"; this He had said of the blessed dead when raised, and He had said it, be it noted, *in this immediate connection*.—Luke xx. 36. And it was our Lord Himself who had elsewhere called the first resurrection by contrast "the resurrection *unto life*," whereas He called the other "the resurrection unto judgment," a judgment in view of which He bade us "fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Gehenna." And yet in this Scripture Bishop Moule finds the deepest indication of man's natural immortality. From this we turn to the four further "Scriptures, in which he regards the natural immortality of man as taken for granted." Of these let us take first the passage which we have not so far touched on, viz. John iii. 36. To face it with quiet analysis seems to the writer to make it more and more inexplicable that anyone should offer it as proof of the endless life of the wicked in hell. Our Lord is contrasting the position of the believer with that of the unbeliever, and says:—

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;
and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;
but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Here in the first sentence our Lord is unmistakably speaking of the present condition of the believer in this life, he hath everlasting life here and now; as He says elsewhere, he is passed from death unto life. Naturally, then, the parallelism of the sentences would bid us interpret the reference to the condition of the unbeliever as applying to the present also. If so, the statement that "he shall not see life" becomes exactly analogous to what Christ has said above,—v. 3.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," in which case the second clause will also

have its natural present application, i.e. the wrath of God is resting on him now, he is now abiding under the curse. But granting that the second clause refers to the future, to the final forfeiture of life by the unbeliever at the great assize, even so to press the passage to mean more than that the wrath of God is resting on him and will find its goal in his final exclusion from life would seem to be very far-fetched. Who would ever have dreamed of interpreting the words to mean that 'the wrath of God rests on him eternally, and he must be eternally existent and conscious to feel the pressure of that wrath,' unless the assumption were present to the mind that man is inherently an immortal creature?

The passage affords a striking illustration of the false principle of exegesis which we pointed out at the beginning and which is all too commonly used to defend untenable positions, viz. resting the proof upon a possible inference (sometimes even barely possible!), and making it do duty for a necessary inference, which latter alone can establish a demonstration. And that Bishop Moule himself hesitated to rest a doctrine so far-reaching and of such primary importance (if true) upon such doubtful inferences is betrayed by the curious threefold repetition of the word 'seems' in so brief a statement, viz. :—

Here too *seems* to lie the deepest indication in Scripture . . .

It *seems* to be indicated . . . that moral personality is . . . permanent . . .

This *seems* to underlie our Lord's reasoning. . . .

Those who knew and loved Dr. Handley Moule, as did the writer, will gladly recognize that this hesitancy was in part at least the outcome of a beautiful humility which shrank from dogmatism. But even with this allowance, the hesitancy is still significant; and, as an unconscious witness to the weakness of his case, it is further emphasized by the fact that the conclusion which he draws from these four Scriptures is *not positive but negative*, for his claim is that in these Scriptures

“the second death is seen to have no necessary tendency to cessation of being.”

Surely a negative plea such as this is a weak foundation for a tenet so tremendous, that the life of the wicked is preserved after resurrection and judgment in endless conscious suffering! Perhaps it will be well here, although it be a repetition, to remind our readers very briefly of the scriptural reasons advanced in previous chapters for rejecting the three remaining out of the four above-named passages as unable to sustain the conclusion which Bishop Moule claims to be deducible from them.

To argue from Matthew xxv. 46 that everlasting punishment must necessarily be conterminous with the eternal life named in the same verse is to be unaware of the discovery (brought to our attention by the use of Bishop Moule's own wise dictum, that the duration implied in the adjective *aiōnios* must be sought in the noun to which it is attached), that *aiōnios* when attached to nouns of action *always* (where any certain inference can be drawn) denotes endlessness not of the process of that action, but of its result. It has been affirmed that to interpret *aiōnios* differently in two clauses of the same verse is ‘a counsel of despair’;¹ rather is it evident that those who so urge have not been sufficiently thorough in their study to discover that *aiōnios* is actually so used, with differing meanings in the same verse, in three passages elsewhere in Scripture; and *aiōn* likewise in another.²

Again, to use Revelation xiv. 11 as evidence of the endless torment theory, shows that those who so adopt it have not been sufficiently observant to see that their interpretation is refuted by a similar phrase found near at hand in this book itself. Is it stated in Revelation xiv. 11 relative to the followers of the beast that “the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever”? Similarly does Revelation xix. 3 declare of Babylon that “her smoke rose up for ever and ever.” That in the case

¹ Prof. Salmond, in “The Christian Doctrine of Immortality.”

² See Chapter VI, pp. 118 and 128.

of Babylon this statement cannot mean that Babylon will be for ever burning (as claimed for the fate of the followers of the beast), is sufficiently indicated by the earlier statements that that great city was 'thrown down' like a millstone in the deep, and should "be found no more at all."—Rev. xviii. 21. Are we wrong then to accept this difficult book as the best interpreter of its own highly figurative language?

Once again, Revelation xx. 10 tells us that the beast and the false prophet were in the lake of fire during the millennium, and were found there at its close, when the devil was cast in also, all three to be tormented day and night for ever and ever. But the traditional interpretation forgets that before it can be proved that those cast into the lake of fire will continue eternally alive therein, it must first establish that these three are indestructible beings, whereas of the beast it is twice specifically stated that he 'goeth into perdition,' a fate involving, as the Greek term *apōleian* shows, termination of life. We have seen also that 'day and night' imply a period confined within the bounds of time, and that Scripture forbids us by its use elsewhere to assert that 'the ages of the ages' always denote a period interminable.

And yet once again, in referring to Revelation xx. 14, 15, we trust that we have made it clear above that to interpret the second death as meaning a condition of endless life in suffering is not only to destroy the natural analogy between the first death and the second; it is also, by necessary inference, a direct denial of the Scripture statement that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death; it renders meaningless the Scripture statement that Death and Hades themselves will be cast into the lake of fire; it empties of part at least, if not of much, of its glory the prospect of the day when God will be all in all; and finally it lands our beloved brethren in responsibility for the awful doctrine of the Eternity of Sin.

We think our readers will agree that if so great and good a man as the late Bishop Moule could make out no stronger case than the above for the doctrine of Eternal

Torment, when writing a text-book for theological students, that doctrine has a poor foundation indeed on which to rest.

Perhaps next it will be well to deal with the somewhat elaborate and artificial system of interpretation of Scripture terminology, which has arisen in the effort to harmonize the language of Scripture with the unproved but accepted axiom of natural immortality of human kind. We have seen that death, when spoken of the doom of the impenitent, is confidently asserted to be not death, but endless life in separation from God, with its accompaniments of ceaseless sin and suffering. Similarly, a courageous effort has been made to absolutely empty the word 'destroy,' its derivatives and cognates, of all vestige of its simple and primary meaning of the termination of life. We have left our readers to judge of the success or otherwise of this bold plea, when it is brought to the test of substituting the definitions given by its own advocates for the word, which they claim to have correctly interpreted in its scriptural usage. We mention this again to draw attention to the fact that the advocates of these special meanings as the true scriptural meanings of 'death' and 'destruction,' etc., fail to see that they are transgressing a well-recognized principle of all sound interpretation of language, viz. that secondary and figurative meanings of words must be interpreted in the light of and as deducible from the radical and primary meaning, instead of endeavouring to deduce the primary meaning from any secondary or special use.

To our regret a marked example of this fault is to be found in the Scofield Reference Bible. That book, which stands deservedly high among Bible helps, and is valuable in so many ways as rightly dividing the word of truth, is unfortunately marred by its treatment of this topic of the nature and destiny of man. Under John iii. 16, Dr. Scofield has this note on the word 'perish' and the scriptural meaning of *apollumi* :—

"Gk. *apollumi*, trans. 'marred,' Mark ii. 22; 'lost,'

Matt. x. 6 ; xv. 24 ; xviii. 11 ; Luke xv. 4, 6, 32. In no New Testament instance does it signify cessation of existence or of consciousness. It is the condition of every non-believer."

Here it will be observed that Dr. Scofield's first illustration of the use of *apollumi*, evidently intended by him to be a characteristic example, is one used not of an animate being, but of a thing inanimate. "The wine is spilled and the bottles will be marred." The R.V., however, has the better reading and translates it, "the wine perisheth and the skins." It will be seen that the verb has necessarily a different meaning when used of things animate and inanimate ; in the former case its primary meaning is to end life, in the latter to end the usefulness of the thing spoken of. The skins ceased to be of use as bottles because rent. The further examples which Dr. Scofield gives to establish the scriptural meaning of *apollumi* are all of them in its sense of 'to lose,' some with literal significance, e.g. the lost sheep of the parable (Luke xv. 4, 6), the others in its spiritual significance, the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. x. 6 ; xv. 24), my son which was lost.—Luke xv. 32. But whether used literally or spiritually, the sense of losing is not the primary but a secondary meaning of the verb *apollumi*, as will be found by reference to any dictionary. When, therefore, Dr. Scofield argues, with these examples, that "in no New Testament instance does it signify cessation of existence or of consciousness," he is arguing from the secondary meaning to the primary instead of vice versa ; and he is endeavouring to escape from the fact, which will be at once patent on reference to the exhaustive table given in Chapter VII, that, in every single New Testament instance of *apollumi* in its primary meaning of destroy (in its active voice) and of perish (in the middle voice), when spoken of animate beings, it means *the termination of life*. To speak of cessation of existence or of consciousness is to misrepresent the issue, unconsciously, no doubt, but none the

less it is a misrepresentation.¹ We do not claim that 'destroy' when spoken of physical death involves "cessation of existence or of consciousness"—what we do claim, and what cannot be denied, is that it does involve cessation of physical life.

Equally offending against the above noted law of sound exegesis is Dr. Scofield's treatment of the meaning of *olethros*. His footnote on the word 'destruction' in 1 Corinthians v. 5 is as follows:—

"Gk. *olethros*, used elsewhere, 1 Thessalonians v. 3 ; 2 Thessalonians i. 9 ; 1 Timothy vi. 9 ; never means annihilation."

The passage from which he is arguing here speaks of the destruction of the flesh. Paul is, therefore, using the word in its primary and literal signification, which obviously and undeniably means the termination of the life of the backslider who was to be thus disciplined. His flesh was to be destroyed that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. *Olethros* has the same original root as *apollumi*, and the root *ol-* signifies the termination of life. The three remaining instances of the use of *olethros* all refer to the doom of the lost ; therefore, with the well-recognized law of language to guide us, that the key to interpret the spiritual and secondary use of a word must be sought in its literal and primary meaning, we are brought to the unavoidable conclusion that when Paul speaks of *olethros* as the final doom of the lost, there also he intends us to understand by it termination of life, only that here it is not the death of the body alone which is spoken of, but the death of the whole man—spirit, soul, and body.

¹ Since the above words were penned, Dr. Scofield has passed to his rest. The writer would like to lay a grateful tribute on his grave, of the delight he finds in studying the Scofield Bible. And from records of his life that have appeared since his death, it is manifest that in Bible study he was a truth seeker who (like the writer) experienced the pain of the harsh judgment of other Christians when he brought to light truth that had long been buried under the traditions of men. Had he lived a little longer, the writer ventures to believe that he would have been one of the first to abandon the doctrine of endless torment in the light of the Scripture evidence set forth in this book.

Again, Dr. Scofield's interpretation of the second death will reveal the confusion in which this highly artificial method of interpretation has involved him. On Genesis i. 26, under the heading 'Man,' he writes :—

The body, separable from spirit and soul, and susceptible of death, is nevertheless an integral part of man, as the resurrection shows.

And on Revelation xx. 14, under the heading 'Second Death,' he writes :—

It is 'second' relatively to the preceding physical death of the wicked in unbelief and rejection of God ; their eternal state is one of eternal 'death' (i.e. separation from God) in sins.

Thus, in these two sentences, he uses the word 'death' in two different senses which are wholly inconvertible. The body, separable from spirit and soul, is susceptible of *death* ; these are his words. But we ask, when the spirit has left the body, what is the death it has died ? What else but *loss of life* ? But observe ! 'eternal death' Scofield defines to be eternal separation from God, by which he means that spirit, soul and body will be alive for ever, but in conscious suffering and moral ruin, away from God. In other words, this 'eternal death' is *not loss of life* at all ; and consequently the only reason to Dr. Scofield's mind why the second death is called the second, is not that the *second death* has any analogy to the *first death*, but merely that in order of time it follows it. His own attempted definition has destroyed the perfectly simple and natural analogy between the two deaths, the first death being that of the body, the second death being that of the whole man, the death of body, soul, and spirit. We have heard our Lord's declaration that God is able to destroy both body and soul in Gehenna : and we have Paul's implication that the spirit is destructible, when he delivers the Corinthian offender to Satan "for the *destruction* of the flesh, that the spirit may be *saved* in

the day of the Lord Jesus";¹ on which the Syriac version throws yet clearer light; for it reads, that "the spirit may have life in the day of Jesus Christ."

In this same note on the Second Death, Dr. Scofield reveals yet further the weakness of the case for the everlasting conscious suffering of the wicked. For he writes:—

The 'second death' and 'the lake of fire' are identical terms (Rev. xx. 14), and are used of the eternal state of the wicked.

Here follow the words given above, and he proceeds:—

That the second death is not annihilation is shown by a comparison of Revelation xix. 20 with Revelation xx. 10. After one thousand years in the lake of fire the Beast and the False Prophet are still there, undestroyed. The words 'for ever and for ever' ('to the ages of the ages') are used in Hebrew i. 8 for the duration of the throne of God, eternal in the sense of unending.

This is the solitary Scripture passage from which we have been able to find Dr. Scofield offering evidence for this awful traditional interpretation. In his Note on 'Man,' Genesis i. 26, partly quoted above, he takes the deathlessness of soul and spirit for granted. In his Note on 'Man a trinity' (1 Thess. v. 23), Dr. Scofield offers no proof of the immortality of soul or spirit. And again in his Note on 'Death (spiritual),' he simply asserts it, with a reference to the second death, for he writes:—

Prolonged beyond the death of the body, spiritual death is a state of eternal separation from God in conscious suffering. This is called 'the second death.'—Rev. ii. 10; xx. 6, 14; xxi. 8.

He is thus resting the whole of his case on the sufferings of the Beast and the False Prophet, recorded as lasting through the millennium. But, as we have already pointed out, when our study of Scripture reached this

¹ 1 Cor. v. 5.

point in the Book of Revelation, there are no less than three separate and independent reasons each of which forbids us from claiming that the everlasting conscious suffering of all the wicked is a necessary and certain inference from this record of the sufferings of the Beast and the False Prophet, for

1. Their case is manifestly exceptional.
2. We do not know that either of them were ordinary men, incarnate demons they may both have been. And that an evil spirit is destructible is evident from the fear expressed by the demon whom the Lord was about to cast out, when he cried, "Art Thou come to destroy us?"—Mark i. 24. (Gk. *apolesai*.)
3. And twice over it is specifically stated of the Beast, that "he goeth into perdition."—Rev. xvii. 8, 11 (Gk. He departeth unto destruction. *Apôleian*.)

We have thus seen that two such deservedly trusted and beloved leaders amid evangelical ranks in Britain and U.S.A. as the late Drs. Handley Moule and Scofield, in spite of their great knowledge of and loyalty to Scripture, are in a poor way indeed when they endeavour to deduce Eternal Torment from Scripture.

An argument, paralleling these in its weakness, is offered by a well-known earlier writer, Dr. Pearson, whose work on the Creed used to be reckoned a standard text-book for theological students in the Anglican Church. In defence of this doctrine he advances the analogy of the two resurrections, stating it somewhat thus :—

Seeing that in Scripture two resurrections are recognized, yet often but one is called *the* resurrection; similarly, granted that one life only in Scripture is called life everlasting, it may well be that there are in reality two conditions of life everlasting, one of bliss, and one of woe.

It will be seen at once that this argument at best is but a surmise, a possible inference on the ground of

analogy. And here our fundamental principle of sound interpretation comes in, viz. that a possible inference can never be accepted as a proof ; at the most it can only be a supplementary buttress to a certain deduction or a plain statement.

But the analogy itself is inadmissible, for while in Scripture two resurrections are spoken of, a first and a second, two conditions of eternal life are not named. A more correct analogy would have been the first and second death, where the second death is sometimes spoken of (e.g. as in Rom. vi. 23), as if it were the only death, the former being merely temporary, the latter being ultimate and final. But this analogy, so far from helping Dr. Pearson's argument in favour of endless life for all, tells strongly against it.

CHAPTER XI

OUR CASE AND ITS OPPONENTS (*contd.*)

IN the preceding chapter we have reviewed the scriptural arguments put forth on behalf of the theory of Eternal Torment by three eminent teachers and writers, and have found them strangely weak.

We now take up two objections levelled by its defenders against any other theory as being inadequate. It will be observed that both of these are very much of the nature of a priori reasonings, a method which is always to be deprecated in dealing with matters on which a divine revelation alone can speak with authority, matters which in the nature of the case lie beyond our present human ken.

The first is wont to be stated thus :—

The infinite sacrifice of Calvary declares the infinite nature of sin : an infinite sin demands an infinite punishment.

Here let it be noted that the man who uses this argument is on very dangerous ground. He is interpreting the language of Scripture in the light of his own assumption of what sin is, of its measure in the sight of God ; he is making himself the judge of what the cost of Calvary was to our God ; and he is presuming to decide what measure of punishment it behoves a holy God to exact from the person of the irreclaimable sinner. Perhaps it will be answered, ‘ No. He first finds the punishment there, clearly foretold in Scripture ; and finding it there, he justifies the God who declares it.’ We reply—before he can claim to have found endless torment revealed in

Scripture, he must first face and overthrow the case of Scripture as put forward in this book.

To the assertion that this interpretation justifies God, we reply—Do God's judgments need a sinner's justification? Has not God Himself maintained a holy silence, a divine reserve, on what it cost Him to redeem a sinful world?

“God so loved . . . that He gave. . . .”

Would it not be humbler, safer, more reverent to abstain from anything like argument by us frail finite mortals as to what is or what is not becoming for our God to do; and rather to confine ourselves resolutely to the study of what He has revealed to us concerning those judgments, determined to find—at whatever cost to our own preconceptions—what conclusion is in assured harmony with all that His Divine wisdom has seen fit to record for our enlightenment?

The second of these pleas, closely akin to the above, has been recently advanced by an evangelist and Bible teacher of world-wide reputation. He wrote,

When we see sin in all its hideousness . . . nothing but a doctrine that those who persist in the choice of sin . . . shall endure everlasting anguish, will satisfy the demands of our own moral intuitions.

This teacher hereby sets up *his own moral intuition* as being a safe criterion whether a doctrine is or is not Biblical. This is a daring claim indeed! We can imagine the torrent of indignation that he himself would pour upon another who presumed to set up “his own moral intuition” as a sure guide to whether the doctrine of transubstantiation (for instance) was or was not according to the revealed will of God! Is it not passing strange that it should be necessary to insist, even with prominent evangelical leaders, that Scripture and Scripture alone is the criterion whether or not a doctrine is according to the revealed mind of God?

But besides replying to the arguments advanced by

defenders of the doctrine of the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost, it is necessary also that we should notice attacks which have been levelled against our own position as reached in this book. Two objections have been offered against our conclusion, both, be it noted, being, like the two preceding, a priori arguments and not deduced from Scripture, the one being that it is incredible that the wicked dead should be raised to life, only to be put to death again; and the other, that it is quite unbelievable that there exist upon earth two classes of men, so widely and deeply sundered from each other both in constitution and destiny, the one mortal, the other immortal. To the former we reply; this surely is not a fair presentation of the case. The first death that the wicked have passed through has been that death to which all alike are subject, due to our common parentage in Adam. The wicked are raised, not simply that they may suffer a repetition of the first death, but that they may be judged in their bodies for the things done in the body. The judgment itself will be a solemn and awful ordeal, unfolding in the sight of all the justice and the holiness of God. And the punishment will be exactly proportioned to the guilt of each offender. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,"¹ and the present inequalities of earthly life and the many and terrible unrighted wrongs of earth compel us to recognize that a day of retributive justice is due, a day in which, as Scripture teaches us, the sinner will be finally overtaken in his body with the fate that he has earned for himself. The great judgment day and the just retribution that follows will be the needed vindication of our just and holy God in the sight of all the universe.

In favour of the second a priori argument, it is confidently urged that living men do not present such a difference in life and character as such a vital difference in their constitution or destiny would demand. We reply that to state the distinction as above is not quite fair, for no class of men is immortal *now*. That glorious

¹ Heb. x. 31.

consummation of eternal life waits for the resurrection morning. But that the constitution of the saved and of the unsaved here and now is as radically different as are their different destinies—this and nothing less than this is the awful solemnity as well as the unspeakable blessedness of the Gospel message. And this, alas ! is all too little seen, even by Christians themselves ; else how different would be the lives and testimony of many—must we not sorrowfully say, of *most* professing Christians ? Did not Peter write as much ?

“God hath granted unto us His exceeding great and precious promises, that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature.”—2 Peter i. 4 (R.V.).

And did not our Lord, in His interview with Nicodemus, emphasize the essential divergence of the once-born and the twice-born, in their constitution ?

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”—John iii. 6.

And in their destiny also ?

“Except a man be born anew (margin. Or, from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God.”—John iii. 3 (R.V.).

And had not Paul exactly the same in view ? For he wrote,

“He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption (Gk. *phthoran*, physical decay) ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”—Gal. vi. 8.

Must we not acknowledge with shame and sorrow that perhaps the two greatest lacks in the preaching of to-day are represented by these two objections ? The righteousness of God which vindicated His holy law on Calvary will vindicate it again in the sight of all by the judgment of the second death for those whose names are not found written in the Lamb’s book of life. And that day will reveal in fact as well as word that the issue which faced

man during his probation on earth was the alternative of Life or Death.

But in addition to arguments, either on behalf of eternal torment or assailing conditional immortality, I regret to say that our position and we ourselves who defend it have to meet attacks which can only be characterized as unfair. Perhaps the commonest of these unfairnesses is the misrepresentation which uses the term 'annihilation' to describe our conclusion. This has been already dealt with in a previous chapter, and we need not therefore repeat here the grounds which show its unfairness.

Another serious misrepresentation too often used against us is the imputation of motive. Often we are told that the cause which has induced us thus to interpret Scripture is a rebellion of heart and mind against the revealed severity of God's judgments upon sin. I cannot read hearts and therefore cannot speak for the motive of others. But I can say unhesitatingly for myself that I accepted the doctrine of endless torment and bowed in humble submission, so long as I believed it to be the doctrine of Scripture. Nothing but the desire to ascertain with certainty the revealed will of God on the subject has been, so far as I know my own heart, the motive that has moved me to this search; and my readers themselves will be able to judge from the method and spirit of this book whether I have brought to God's word a favourite opinion and sought to justify it thereby, or whether this has been an honest search for light as to what the true meaning of Scripture on the subject is.

Closely akin to this misrepresentation is another which condemns the conclusion obtained as being due to "shallow views of sin," and to an underestimate of the infinite cost and value of Calvary. If we were told that such shallow views were inevitably the *effect* of a mistakenly reached conclusion, that would be a thesis worthy of argument; but to tell us we have reached this conclusion *because* we think lightly of sin, and because we undervalue the priceless cost of our redemption—this is a violation of the love that "thinketh no evil."

And here we cannot rightly leave the advocates of the eternal torment theory without entreating them to frankly face the logical consequences of their own position. Let us recall the grave words of Gladstone, quoted in an earlier chapter, regarding the tenet of natural immortality, that

the entrance into the precincts of Christian doctrine . . . of philosophical speculations disguised as truths of divine revelation . . . is *productive by rational retribution of other falsehoods*. [The italics are ours.]

We believe that this book will have established in the mind of every reader who is willing to abide by the verdict of Scripture, and to abandon all human traditions however deeply rooted, that the dogma of Eternal Torment itself is one of those falsehoods, which the acceptance of a Platonic guess as a Christian axiom has brought with it *by rational retribution*. But it may help to open the eyes of its defenders if they see that the dogma of Eternal Torment itself also has brought with it in its bitter train further retributive falsehoods. We would draw attention to no less than five of these, some of them little if ever recognized or acknowledged, while one of them, if not two,¹ were once the natural and usual concomitants of the presentation of an endless hell, viz. :—

- (a) The eternity of sin.
- (b) The creation of a special body for the wicked dead, in which they may be able to suffer for ever.
- (c) The joy of the redeemed in beholding the miseries of the damned.
- (d) The eternal activity of Death.
- (e) Denial by logical necessity of the finished work of Christ.

(a) Our brethren who teach Eternal Torment may not perhaps have fully realized that their doctrine involves the eternity of sin ; it is indeed, as quoted from Professor Naville above, a concealed form of Pantheism. Though

¹ i.e. b and c.

it may declare that Good has triumphed, yet it leaves Evil eternally co-existent with Good. What is this but dualism? For according to our brethren, Sin and Satan, pain and the curse, sinners and death will last as long as God is God. What can we term this but falsehood, in the light of Scripture which reveals to us the glad day when

“there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”—
Rev. xxi. 4, 5.

(b) Another falsehood, equally terrible, which our brethren must face, for it is the inevitable logical consequence of their theory, is that by a special direct creative act, God in raising the wicked dead will give them a body which will be able to endure unending suffering in the lake of fire *without succumbing under it*. No human body as now constituted could stand such anguish long, without succumbing, whether the suffering be physical, mental, or spiritual. It is passing strange that the modern advocates of endless punishing do not seem to realize the unspeakable solemnity of charging such an act as this upon our holy God without the slightest vestige of authority from His own revelation for so doing. The Church of Rome does not hesitate to-day, as in the past, to hold up before the eyes of its votaries, and specially its children, lurid pictures of the unending sufferings of the damned. Protestants no longer do so, unless in very rare cases. But we must repeat it, and again press it home, that the words above given of such a saintly man as the late Bishop Moule involve it by inescapable inference. Has not Bishop Moule written that

Our Lord assumes for one thing the necessary ultimate coherence, so to speak, of the body and spirit in man, so that if man lives for ever, his body must ultimately share that life?

But if the wicked man's body, raised from the dead, must share the life which he will live for ever in the fiery sufferings of Gehenna, who is it but His Creator, who will raise him from the dead, to whom that indestructible body will be due? Again we ask, do the upholders of this theory realize the consequences in which they have involved themselves?

(c) The third falsehood named above was once on the lips of many a preacher, who doubtless thought that he was honouring God thereby: the assertion that the joys of heaven will be heightened by gazing on the sufferings of the damned. Probably no Protestant preacher lives to-day who would not scorn such a presentation as horrible beyond degree. But we believe we are right to press it nevertheless, painful though it is even to think of, for pitiless logic unhappily compels this deduction from the premises. Let us see. The saved in heaven will surely rejoice in all the manifested will of God: the eternal torment theory declares that this is the punishment inflicted by a just and holy God: this fate of the wicked is the action of the holy loving will of God. How can His ransomed children do otherwise than rejoice in all His holy loving will? Of every follower of the beast it is written that

“he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”—Rev. xiv. 10,

and if it is compatible with the holiness of the angels and with the love of our Redeemer to witness the execution of a certain class of sinner, can it be unfit for the redeemed to witness the execution of other sinners? But here there lies a wide gulf, wide as the poles, that sunders the statement of the divine record from the theory of the traditionalist. It would be one thing to bow in worship and holy humble adoration at sight of the final execution of any of the damned; but to watch such an execution, or even to bear it in memory, knowing that it was a process interminable, knowing that the

sufferings of the victim would last as long as God is God, knowing, too, that the victim himself would be conscious that he would never find escape or diminution—who, constituted as we are now, can believe that we would praise God and cry hallelujah at the sight? Or if we should turn away our faces and strive to forget the awful sight, would this melancholy acceptance of the will of our God be one of the joys of heaven?

I press it on my brethren who believe the endless conscious suffering of the wicked to be the revealed will of God, why do you not openly preach it as your predecessors did, as one of the joys of heaven, to behold those sufferings and to ponder over them? Were not your fathers more logical than yourselves herein?

(d) Still again, Do our brethren not see that they are contradicting Scripture, when they teach that the second death means this endless conscious suffering? If this indeed is death, then death instead of being destroyed by Christ as the last enemy, will be for ever active, its victims writhing in its pitiless grip, as long as God is God.

(e) This last retributive falsehood, a logical denial of the finished work of Christ, our brethren will be inclined to repudiate almost with a smile, as being unthinkable that they can be logically involved in such an inference. Again then let us see. We will gladly withdraw the imputation if it is not demonstrable. The writer's own valued friend, C. G. Trumbull, editor of the "Sunday School Times," who is one of America's noblest souls in candour and in courage, has allowed the statement in his magazine that Matthew xxv. 46 establishes conclusively that the sufferings of the wicked *must* be as interminable as the life of the righteous. This is interpreting eternal punishment to mean *endless punishing*; and if this is the only possible interpretation of 'eternal punishment,' then likewise, by inescapable logic, *eternal redemption can only mean endless redeeming*. Our brother never for one moment, of course, dreamed of such a conclusion; but we believe that he himself will be one of the first to see and admit that this is an inevitable inference, and

that its logical necessity condemns the interpretation as being inadmissible. When our brother came to see that the Lord's Second Advent to earth to reign upon the throne of David was scriptural, he bravely threw the whole weight of his splendid journal into the advocacy of that blessed truth. Result, the loss of many subscribers at first ; but before long the gaining of far more than he had lost. Will he do so again with this his rediscovered truth, centring our life and hope of immortality in the Person of our blessed Lord, a truth with which he will find Scripture *radiant*, to the glory of God and the blessing of his innumerable readers ? God grant it. Let all who see this truth in Scripture and read these words pray for our brother beloved, that he may come to see it with us to be the very truth of God !

UNIVERSALISM

It will have been observed that thus far we have dealt very little, if indeed at all, except inferentially, with that which at the outset we termed the liberal view concerning the destiny of the wicked, viz. that through the discipline of remedial fire, all will be ultimately brought back into fellowship with God. For this apparent omission there has been a reason. As already noted, this doctrine, like that of Eternal Torment, finds its premiss in the assumed natural immortality of all human souls. The doctrine itself has been begotten by a desire to escape from the awful theory that God will maintain the wicked in everlasting conscious suffering ; and in this natural revulsion it has taken refuge in Scriptures which speak of the loving purposes of God's grace as embracing all mankind. In magnifying these Scriptures it has ignored alike the fact that God has left man his free will, and that man can consequently resist God's loving will to the end if he so choose. This theory further disregards the solemn fact that the only place and time of probation revealed to us in Scripture is life on earth here and now. And finally, this theory overlooks the righteousness of God, and that God in His righteous love has affixed a penalty to sin

unrepented of, viz. death. The majesty of God's law demands the carrying out of the declared sentence. And it will be patent to all that if the Scriptures put forward in this book demonstrate that eternal life is only for those who in this life fulfil God's declared conditions, then in the very nature of the case the doctrine of the ultimate restoration of all men is negatived. Once the doctrine of Eternal Life in Christ alone is seen to be scriptural, the theory of restorationism will be abandoned by all whose principle is loyalty to Scripture: perhaps indeed its upholders will find welcome relief in a conclusion manifestly just and sober, and which affords no loophole to the sinner either for procrastination or for making light of sin.

But it will perhaps be fairer to its advocates, and helpful to any of our readers who may be in doubt, if we take a few sample Scriptures which universalists have rested on, and show that they do not of necessity support that view. And we must once again insist that a possible inference from a passage of Scripture can never be accepted as a correct interpretation, if it be found to be contrary to known truths established in Scripture elsewhere. Three or four such Scriptures may suffice as being illustrative of others:—

“The living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”—1 Tim. iv. 10.

This Scripture has been claimed as proving that it is not only God's desire to save all, but that He will ultimately bring this to pass. This interpretation, however, besides ignoring the mass of Scripture which speaks of a penal not a remedial infliction awaiting the wicked dead, fails to see that in a real and blessed sense what we may call a racial salvation has been provided by God through the death of His Son. And this in two different senses. The human race has been living under the probation of grace. But for this delay of grace in the immediate execution of the death sentence upon Adam, he would have had no posterity. The redemptive purpose of God, looking

forward to Calvary, has permitted man to live, with the further possibility of obtaining eternal life for the individual upon God's own terms of mercy and of grace. But if it be so, that Christ has come as the Second Adam, then surely it is true that the price He paid on Calvary for the world's redemption avails for every child of man born into the world, and avails unconditionally until that child is old enough to commit conscious wilful sin. The second death is the penalty for personal transgression unrepented of, it is not the penalty for having been born into the world a child of the first Adam. In this sense, what we lost through no doing of our own as our inheritance from Adam, we regain unconditionally under the Second Adam, the Life-giver. Again,

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."—2 Cor. v. 19.

It surely cannot be maintained that the ultimate salvation of all is a *necessary* inference from this Scripture. For if so, why does Paul immediately speak of the offer of salvation made to man for his acceptance, by ambassadors of God speaking in His Name? Once again,

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.—Eph. i. 10. When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."—1 Cor. xv. 28.

We have taken these two Scriptures together because the one throws light upon the other. The dispensation of the fulness of the times when God will gather together in one all things in Christ is manifestly the time when all things shall have been subdued unto Him, and when the last enemy which is death shall have been destroyed. The Apocalypse throws further light on this, for there we see that not only are the wicked dead to be cast into the lake of fire after the judgment of the great white throne,

there to be burnt up like the chaff with unquenchable fire ; but Death and Hades themselves are to be cast into the lake of fire. Thus the Bible is its own interpreter, revealing to us that God will gather together in one all things in Christ, when every vestige of sin and sinner, of all that opposes God, of death and the curse, shall have been finally blotted out, and when, with Christ triumphant, God shall at length be all in all.

A FINAL DIFFICULTY

If, as we hope, it has now become clear to our readers (*a*) that the doctrine of Christ our Life and Source of Immortality is established from Scripture, and (*b*) that the doctrines founded upon the belief in man's natural immortality must be abandoned by all loyal to Scripture, whether it be the conservative view of Eternal Torment or the liberal view of Universal Salvation, the question will doubtless arise in many minds, If so, why are there so few outstanding men who believe or proclaim the doctrine of Conditional Immortality ? Our reply is twofold. (1) It is never easy to see, and still less to publicly acknowledge, in the face of bitter hostility from our own brethren, that traditions, which have grown up with us from our childhood as part and parcel of our Christian thought, have no countenance in the Word of God. And a man who is engaged in a fruitful ministry will think many times before he will publicly commit himself to the advocacy of a doctrine which may imperil his position and cause his present ministry to be sacrificed. (2) Nevertheless there are living to-day believers in this doctrine so mightily used of God as Canon Hay Aitken, who has very kindly written the preface for this book, a preface arresting and heart searching, and the Rev. George C. Grubb, whose wonderful missions held in past years in Ceylon, in Australia and New Zealand and in Canada will be remembered by many to this day. Here is the testimony of a Toronto citizen, editor of "The Evangelical Christian," who, himself holding Eternal Torment as strongly as anyone, yet protested through his magazine against the recent adoption

in U.S.A. by the first great 'Fundamental Conference' of a creed which was intended by its promoters to be a platform on which to unite all true Evangelicals, but which, in spite of and ignoring an earnest appeal for reconsideration of this question, did not hesitate to ban us who hold the view advanced in this book as being unsound in the faith. Concerning the Rev. G. C. Grubb and his mission in Toronto in the late eighties, the Rev. R. V. Bingham wrote editorially as follows :—

The man who most profoundly moved the city of Toronto in the power of the Spirit during the thirty years that the editor has known it, who brought spiritual quickening to its churches and salvation to great multitudes, who without official invitation or special and elaborate advertising packed the Massey Hall for a month, could not have signed the Philadelphia Doctrinal Statement at the very time he was being so greatly used of God.—“The Evangelical Christian,” August, 1919.

For the further encouragement of our readers who either may now be convinced that this book advocates the true scriptural view, or who feel that the subject should at least receive wide and open reconsideration, and that we who hold it should no longer be placed under a ban, we append the following testimonies, the first three a confession of personal rest in and profit from this doctrine, and the last a valuable confession of its strength, and of the need for open-minded reconsideration of the whole subject. Such testimonies could be many times multiplied from men who have bulked less in the public eye, as well as from those who have been more widely known as its special advocates.

“I wish with the greatest possible emphasis to state that, in my own experience, the reception of this doctrine (Conditional Immortality) has not only not enfeebled my belief in the great doctrines of the Evangelical faith, and especially in the doctrines of In-

carnation, the Atonement, and Regeneration, but has given to all these doctrines a firmer hold on my intellect, my conscience, and my heart.”—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

“ Since I have reached and rested in the conclusion that the ultimate doom of the impenitent is *death*, and not eternal life in agony, a great black cloud seems to have rolled away from the face of God, and I see Him, not only as my loving Father, but as the Father of all His creatures.”—*Professor Butler.*

“ For not far short of a quarter of a century now I have lived in the belief that the view which has been designated ‘ Life in Christ ’ is the real teaching of Scripture. That view is expressed in the words, taken not metaphorically, but in a straightforward manner, ‘ The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ . . . The more I think of it, the more vain appear to me to be all attempts to establish man’s immortality on a physical or metaphysical basis.”—*Professor Sir G. G. Stokes, Bart.*

“ The advocates of what they call ‘ Conditional Immortality ’ have done good service by exposing the baselessness of the popular doctrine of the intrinsic and endless permanence of the human soul. They have also done good service by demanding a reconsideration of the whole matter, and by protesting against a theory long dominant in the Christian pulpit, which as I believe goes far beyond the teaching of Holy Scripture.”—*Professor J. Agar Beet.*

CHAPTER XII

THE CHIEF ADVERSARY OF THIS TRUTH: HIS METHODS AND HIS MOTIVE

IF indeed it be the case, as we trust this book will have made it clear to many, that the Biblical doctrine of man's nature and destiny is that immortality is God's gift to believing man in and through Christ Jesus his Saviour, and that the end of those 'out of Christ' will be to perish with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; and that we need to-day to have this rediscovered truth reinstated, if the Gospel is to recover its pristine purity, simplicity, and power, then it need occasion no surprise to find that our great enemy has been diligent and subtle in his efforts to prevent its widespread reaffirmation within the Church of Christ. "We are not ignorant of his devices," wrote the apostle; and remembering that the devil is able to present himself as an angel of light when he seeks to draw aside the faithful from the Word of God, let us endeavour to trace his wily efforts to prevent God's children from coming to a united and all-satisfying conclusion as to what the Bible does teach regarding the nature and destiny of man.

The first thing we observe is that in his eager desire to maintain an unscriptural dogma as an integral part of the Christian faith, and to represent it as actually fundamental also, he has persuaded Evangelical Christians that *loyalty to the written Word demands it*. How has he done this? By causing a speculation of Pagan philosophy to become accepted by Christians as an axiomatic truth, and to have become through the centuries so deeply imbedded in Christian thought that to-day the great

mass of Bible-loving Christians read the Word of God through the unsuspected colouring medium of this axiom, and have learned from their early years and through a venerable tradition to interpret the language of Scripture in accordance with this preconception, and thus, all unconsciously, to deprive that language of its simple, obvious, natural, and God-intended meaning. And to rivet the fetters of this prejudice yet more firmly on the minds and hearts of the spiritual, he whispers to some, "Sinners will take advantage of it, if you lessen the terrors of hell"; to others, "You will be dishonouring the person of the Lord Jesus Christ if you accept this view, for you are lowering the value of His Cross"; and to yet others, "You are in bad company, if you hold such a view, for you are in the same boat with well-known false teachers who embody the doctrine of annihilation in their false systems."

Thus, by appealing to a good motive, viz. to be loyal to Scripture and to avoid error, the great enemy is skillfully turning Evangelical Christians away from an unbiassed consideration of whether the true meaning of Scripture regarding the doom of the lost does or does not uphold the doctrine of endless torment.

The answer to these suggestions is twofold :—

1. These fears can be dismissed as needless.
2. The sole criterion of the truth of a doctrine that claims to be Christian is this: Does Scripture rightly understood establish this doctrine or not?

These fears can be dismissed as groundless, for a sinner will have far more dread of a doom which, while unspeakably awful, shocks neither his reason nor his conscience, than of one which his finite mind is unable to grasp and against which his moral being instinctively revolts. And we ask, Is it really slighting to the Cross of Christ to teach in His own words that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him *should not perish*, but have everlasting life"; and is not our Divine Saviour Himself the best witness of

what He means by 'perishing'? Or shall we refuse the interpretation that He gave us when He bade us, "Labour not for the meat which *perisheth*, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life"? Again, the Son of Man died under the curse of the law we had broken, "being made a curse for us." What was the death he bore on Calvary? It was the death that Adam died, a triple death, separation from God, moral and spiritual; under condemnation, legal; and the triumph of mortality over the physical frame. All this Christ suffered for us. Does it lessen the value of that wondrous death to teach and to believe that those who reject Him die the second death, the death of body and soul, and that when the stone they have rejected falls upon them it will scatter them as dust?—Matt. xxi. 44 (R.V.).

To take up our second point—No test but Scripture, for proof of a doctrine. It will not do to condemn a doctrine because it is held in conjunction with other doctrines that are false. For it may well be believed, as with Russellism, that the errors propagated gained a hearing because the teacher had first brought into prominence Scripture truths which the Evangelical churches as a whole had either neglected or actually opposed. "Pastor Russell" taught the return of the Lord Jesus and the blessedness of His millennial reign on earth. Here his hearers could see that he was giving them Scripture truth which they seldom heard elsewhere. Are these two glorious revealed facts of the Second Advent and of the righteous rule of Christ from David's Throne—are these to be rejected by us because a prominent advocate of them has turned aside into fatal and fundamental error? And if 'the blessed hope' and the millennium are not to be denied just because Pastor Russell held and taught them in conjunction with error, what about the ultimate extinction of the lost? Is that to be rejected because he taught it? Certainly not—the truth or otherwise of the Second Advent of Christ, of His millennial reign, and of conditional immortality, as of all other teachings that claim to be Christian, is to be

tested by the one sole criterion of the revealed mind of God, viz. What saith the Scripture ?

But here emerges into view another subtle and too often successful device of the great enemy. That saint and scholar, the late Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Boston, in the first chapter of his book, "The Ministry of Healing," points out that when the Church at large has forgotten or neglected some revealed truth and God raises up a man to bring back that truth into the limelight, there is real danger lest the discoverer should give that truth a larger place than it holds in the scriptural setting, with the double result that losing the balance of truth he is carried away into fanaticism, while conservative Christians draw back, alarmed or repelled. Dr. Gordon might have enlarged upon this, to point out that too often also the great enemy will intoxicate the finder of some forgotten truth with the joy of his discovery, and puff him up ; result, spiritual pride and often a big downfall, even morally ; or having tasted the joy of discovery, elated by it and by the attention it has aroused, the finder will seek for more discoveries, and will be snared into thinking that he can interpret Scripture better than others ; result, errors and heresies, often fantastic, always more or less disastrous. Along whichever of these three lines the great enemy succeeds in entrapping the proclaimer of rediscovered truth, the result is the same, the truth is thereby and to that extent discredited in the sight of conservative Christians, and they refuse it as associated with error or fanaticism. Thus both sides suffer ; the Spirit of truth is grieved, and the father of lies rejoices ! Can *we* in such a case say of the latter, "We are not ignorant of his devices" ?

But alas ! the tragedy of the matter does not end here. The enemy has accomplished yet deeper and probably more widespread mischief even than the above by his manipulations within the Church of Christ. Not only has he succeeded in introducing a speculative tenet of Greek philosophy into Christianity "by a back door," as Gladstone has so aptly said of the doctrine of the im-

mortality of the soul ; but having obtained acceptance of this by nearly all Evangelical Christians as a wellnigh axiomatic truth, needing little or no proof, he has proceeded to build upon this false foundation a structure which culminates in a daring claim likely to prove to be the capstone of the coming Anti-Christian system, *the deification of man*. As Philip Mauro has so well pointed out in his book, "The Number of Man," nearly all the movements which from without or from within are to-day assailing or undermining the Christian faith, independently and yet simultaneously, are all converging upon this Anti-Christian goal. But apparently Philip Mauro has overlooked the equally striking and significant fact that every one of these, whether it be Modernism, New Theology, Christian Science, Theosophy, or other false movements, all have for their fundamental basis, their "fons et origo," the doctrine of the natural immortality of man. This is bad enough, but the tragedy deepens when it is seen that it is Evangelical Christianity which has supplied them with their false foundation, and having done so, is in a poor position to overthrow the superstructure which they have built upon it. Let Evangelical Christians return to the revealed fact of the evanescence of sinful man except by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that our Saviour is the Life as well as the Light of man, and in the humbling searchlight of this truth man will be brought to his true place at the foot of the Cross.

And yet further—we have still to take account of and to measure (so far as such measure is possible to us) the untold mischief wrought by the dogma of endless torment. The first of these, and it is undeniable, is that in the Christian pulpits of to-day there seems to be almost a conspiracy of silence regarding the doom of the Christ rejector or the neglecter of so great salvation. Many, it is true, openly hold and teach 'eternal hope'; the popular twin doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man (possibly the deadliest of all the half-truths of to-day) leads logically to the same

conclusion. But perhaps the majority of pulpits take refuge in a cautious silence or in vague generalities as to the Judgment of the Great White Throne and the finality of its awful sentence. *What has caused this silence?* What but the revulsion of heart and mind against the doctrine of endless, awful, hopeless, conscious suffering of millions in the lake of fire, lasting as long as God is God? If a preacher believes all men to be immortal, and sees the irretrievable doom of the lost too plainly set forth in Scripture for him to advocate eternal hope or universal restoration, and if his soul and mind rebel against teaching the eternity of sin and Satan, of suffering and sorrow, and of death, against believing in a retribution which maintains the sinner in a ceaseless life of awful hopeless unspeakable suffering, what wonder that he keeps silence, not seeing the wondrous scriptural bearing of the fact that our Saviour Jesus Christ has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel? *But the silence is disastrous*, for that silence of necessity obscures the righteousness of God and the unfailing certainty of His spoken word, both of which demand the vindication of law and the punishment of the unrepentant unbelieving sinner. The tendency of to-day is to minimize or condone sin, and to forget the awful holiness of our God, who is a consuming fire. And a conspiracy of silence as to the actuality of the lake of fire of course helps to confirm this modern cheapening of the government of Jehovah. King David lost his throne for a time and lost his favourite son by a rebel's death. Why? Because he allowed his fatherhood to override his kingly duty; as an indulgent father he overlooked the sin of murder in an unrepentant son, and finally reinstated him. Should God act thus, His very throne would fall! To preach the love of God without emphasizing the needful righteousness of His government is to forget the awful lesson of David's fatherhood exercised at the expense of his kingship.

Again, the doctrine of endless torment, preached as a fundamental of the Christian faith, has kept earnest

seeking souls out of the Kingdom. They could not bring themselves to believe in the love or the justice or the wisdom of a Creator who gave man his free will, knowing that under temptation he would fall, and knowing that this endless hell would be the doom of countless myriads. And they have been taught that this is a fundamental of the faith. A striking and painful instance of this is given in the life of the authoress, the late Miss Deborah Alcock. Four young men, attracted by the marvellous power of her father's faithful preaching, were nevertheless turned aside from accepting Christ as their Saviour and Lord, believing that allegiance to Him involved acceptance of this tenet. Hence they lived and died without personal faith in Him, though admiring His life and teachings, and seeking to mould their lives by His example. But for the preaching of this fatal error they would have doubtless bowed in glad submission as sinners at the foot of His Cross.

Others are driven by revulsion into the ranks of universalism and restorationism, fixing their gaze on the Scriptures that teach that God will ultimately be all in all, and shutting their eyes to the passages which speak of final judgment. Thus they reach a conclusion contrary to the whole tenor of Revelation, which separates in eternal destiny the once-born and the twice-born.

Finally, the truth-seeker will find to his deep sorrow, though not altogether to his surprise, that this awful dogma has had a gravely damaging effect upon the characters of its defenders and upholders. He has only to read the writings of some of the best-known modern advocates of endless torment to find them exceeding bitter in spirit and unfair in argument towards those who differ from them. Now truth can afford to be patient, loving, and generous; ascribing the best of motives to its Christian opponent and doing full justice to his position.

Great and good men seem to become inevitably lowered when they defend this doctrine. Those who have observed or suffered from this spirit will recognize that the result betrays the true source of such a tenet. And

it is all the more noteworthy because of course it is in most cases, if not in all, entirely unconscious, supposing itself to be a commendable spirit of loyalty to truth.

Skilful indeed is the great enemy to persuade Evangelical Christians thus to hold at arm's length and to refuse active Christian co-operation with their brethren in Christ who are as loyal as themselves to the written Word of God, on the ground that because of a different interpretation from their own on this one point, they are therefore unsound and dangerous. And this at an hour when all Christians loyal to the Old Book through and through should be standing shoulder to shoulder.

If the above sketch of present conditions in relation to the Biblical doctrine of man's nature and destiny be in any measure an accurate view of the case, we may well ask why this remarkable hostility of the Great Enemy to the scriptural doctrine of "Conditional Immortality," as it is commonly called, or as the writer greatly prefers to term it in scriptural language, "Life in Christ." We reply, because the Devil knows full well that the restoration of this truth means a simpler Gospel, a more appealing Gospel, a more humbling Gospel, in a word a pristine Gospel, of greater purity and power. God be praised for "the simple Gospel" now preached by all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and who proclaim salvation through His atoning blood to every sinner who receives Him. And just in so far as it is in accordance with God's Word and preached in the power and love of the Spirit, so far is it mighty toward God in the pulling down of strongholds of sin and of unbelief, and wins God-given triumphs in the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of sinful men. But to restore to Scripture language its simple, natural, and unsophisticated meaning is to bring it at once into closer touch with everyday life, to make it more intelligible and more appealing to 'the man in the street.' Teach him that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," that in this Scripture death means death, and eternal life means eternal life, each in its natural and

obvious sense, and new light will begin to dawn. Teach him that he is not an immortal creature, but that life and immortality are offered to him in Christ Jesus, who died that he might live; teach him that to reject this free gift of life from the hand of the God against whom he has sinned, from the God who has paid the price of his reconciliation by the death of His well beloved and only begotten Son; teach him that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the seal of God's acceptance of the sin-offering of the Lamb that bore away the sin of the world; but also is the assurance of immortality for himself if he receives Christ as his substitute and his life; teach him that the presence of the Spirit of God in the twice-born is man's only pledge as also his only source of immortality, and the Old, Old Story comes to him with a new freshness and simplicity such as that with which it fell from the lips of our Christ and His first disciples. The gospel to-day, as of old, is for the poor, the simple, the unlettered; "to the poor the gospel is preached"; and, be it remembered, the common people heard Him gladly. But to teach that eternal life means eternal life in bliss, while the second death means eternal life in conscious suffering, this is to speak the language of the schools, and to mystify the seeking soul. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not *perish*, but have *everlasting life*." John iii. 16, itself the very key-text of the gospel, becomes illumined as with fresh light from Heaven when it dawns upon us by the study of the scriptural meaning of "perish" and by our Lord's own use of it elsewhere that He used it here in its simple and primary meaning of "loss of life," and by "everlasting life" He means just simply and naturally "life for ever," not mere endless existence, but life which is life indeed, life in Him, nay, possessing Him as Christ our life, and becoming partakers of the Divine Nature, which is deathless. The glorious simplicity, the depth and blessedness of this truth, "He that hath the Son hath the life," has become dimmed and fogged by the pre-

conception present to most minds in our so-called Christian lands at home that man is an immortal creature, indestructible, bound to live for ever, somewhere, somehow, because possessed of an "immortal soul."

But besides being a simpler gospel, the gospel of life and immortality is a more appealing gospel, especially to the heathen. The heathen, as we who have lived among them know, whether in Africa, India, or elsewhere, go all their lives in perpetual fear of death. To them death is an awful ever-present terror ; true, they believe that the spirits of the dead live on beyond the grave ; their own offerings show that, but they have no light to pierce the veil. Bring them Christ's message, "I am the resurrection and the life," show them that eternal life and immortality are God's free gift to them in and through a crucified and risen Saviour, and you have for them a missionary gospel which meets them where they are, and which also brings home to them the scriptural gulf which separates alike in nature and in destiny those born of the flesh from those born of the spirit, a gulf impassable, once the river of death is crossed.

Yet again, to the man of modern culture, of refinement and education, glorying in his civilization and high destiny, here is a humbling gospel indeed, teaching him that, instead of being immortal, as he supposes himself to be, he is a frail, perishing mortal, under doom of death, living in a sphere of death, separate from Him who is the life, and that, while eternal life is his the instant he humbles himself as a guilty sinner at the foot of Calvary to find in Christ his Redeemer, without this source of inward and eternal life he will be cut down like a withered branch and cast into the fire of God's wrath ; instead of being garnered like the living grain, he will be burnt up with unquenchable fire ; his very memorial will perish with him, when death shall be abolished, and God shall be all in all.

Finally, this truth restores Christ's Resurrection to its supreme and central place in the Christian faith. If Christ be not risen, Christ who is Himself the resurrection

and the life, then indeed is our preaching vain ; we are yet in our sins ; and they that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. Christ is Himself the bread of life, that we may eat and live for ever. Christ Himself is He that liveth and was dead ; and behold, He is alive for evermore. When we see Him thus as Christ our life, and receive Him thus, begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, then are we ready with a depth and height, a joy and power beyond all known before, to join in the apostle's cry of adoration,

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”—1 Tim. i. 17.

APPENDIX A

TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY FATHERS

IN Chapter III was noticed the claim too often rashly put forward that the doctrine of the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost has been held by all branches of the Christian Church from the very first. We therefore subjoin a few quotations from the Fathers of the first two centuries.

FIRST CENTURY FATHERS

How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God ! Life in immortality, splendour in righteousness, truth in perfect confidence. . . .

Clement of Rome, *Ep. i*, ch. 35.

He who chooseth other things shall be destroyed¹ with his works. . . . For the day is at hand on which all things shall perish with the evil one.

Barnabas, ch. 21.

Breaking one and the same bread which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying, but which causes that we should live for ever in Jesus Christ.

Ignatius, *Ep. to Ephesians*, ch. 20.

Be sober, as an athlete of God : the prize set before thee is immortality and eternal life.

Ignatius, *Ep. to Polycarp*, ch. 2.

They only who fear the Lord and keep His commandments have life with God ; but as to those who keep not His commandments, there is no life in them.

Shepherd of Hermas, p. 361.

¹ By 'destroy' Barnabas clearly means to take life, for he writes, " Neither shalt thou destroy the child after it is born " (ch. xix.).

SECOND CENTURY FATHERS

The soul partakes of life, since God wills it to live. Thus then it will not even partake of life when God does not will it to live. For to live is not its attribute, as it is God's. . . . Thus some which have appeared worthy of God never die ; but others are punished as long as God wills them to exist and to be punished.

Justin Martyr. Dial. c. Trypho., chs. 5 and 6.

The soul is not in itself immortal, O Greeks. Yet it is possible for it not to die.

Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*, ch. 13.

Man had been made a middle nature, neither wholly mortal, nor altogether immortal, but capable of either.

Theophilus to Autolycus, ch. 24.

It is the Father of all who imparts continuance for ever and ever on those who are saved. For life does not arise from us, nor from our own nature ; but it is bestowed according to the grace of God. . . . All things that have been made had a beginning when they were formed, but endure as long as God wills that they should have an existence and continuance. . . . He who shall reject life and prove himself ungrateful to his Maker . . . deprives himself of the privilege of continuance for ever and ever.

Irenaeus against Heresies, bk. ii., ch. 34.

The spiritual communion of faith commits man to eternity (along with those who are divine), immortalizing him. . . . Let us regard His commands as the short and straight path to immortality. . . . Being sons we are made perfect, being perfect we are made immortal.

Clement of Alexandria.

REFERENCES TO THE SUBJECT

BY THE EARLY FATHERS

	Eternal Torment.	Immortality of the Soul.	Conditional Immortality.	Scripture Undefined.	Life and Death set in Contrast.
<i>1st Century writings</i>					
Clement of Rome			2	8	2
Polycarp, Epistle of . . .			1		1
Smyrna, Church letter . .	2				
Polycarp's dying prayer			3		
Barnabas			5	2	5 (1)
Ignatius. A			9	7	6
" B			3	6	1
Anon. Ep. to Diognetus	(1)	1	(3)	1	
Hermas			7	1	16 (1)
Didaché ¹	not	yet reviewed.			
<i>2nd Century writings.</i>					
Justin Martyr	6	3	3 (1)	20	4
Athenagoras		6			
Tatian	1	2	1		
Theophilus		(2)	3	1	1
Irenaeus			28 (1)	14	5
Clement of Alexandria ¹	not	yet reviewed.			

¹ The writer's studies of the Fathers of the first two centuries he was unable to complete before leaving Canada in June, 1923, and constant travelling since has rendered this as yet impossible. He has, however, elicited all the references to the subject under the various headings given above from all except the Didaché ("Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"), which probably belongs to the first century, and Clement of Alexandria. His review of the works of Irenaeus also is not yet complete, but is carried through Books I-IV "Against Heresies."

The numbers in brackets refer to passages from which it is difficult to draw a sure conclusion. The writings of Ignatius, marked A and B, include two forms, A the shorter, and B the longer, in which they are extant; of which the shorter are believed to be the more genuine.

A study of this table reveals that the doctrine of Conditional Immortality had an immense preponderance in the writings of the first two centuries. (The Didaché and Clement of Alexandria are both to be reckoned on this side.) It also shows the curious fact that of these

APPENDIX B

HADES AND TARTARUS

IN Chapter V it was pointed out that in the Authorized Version of the New Testament the word 'Hell' is used to translate three different Greek terms, each with a perfectly distinct meaning. Of these 'Gehenna' alone refers to the place of final doom of the wicked dead, which is commonly understood by the word 'hell' in popular phraseology. The other two, as there stated, are 'Hades' and 'Tartarus.' Now as Hades (the LXX equivalent to the Hebrew 'Sheol' in the Old Testament) refers always and only to the intermediate state between death and resurrection, and Tartarus to the prison-house where the angels that sinned are kept for judgment, neither of them falls within the scope of this book, which deals only with the ultimate destiny of men, good and bad, that awaits them beyond the resurrection, the first resurrection being the resurrection unto life, the second that unto judgment.

Here, however, we submit the New Testament passages in which the word Hades and Tartarus occur in the original.

fathers Justin Martyr and Tatian are self-contradictory in places. This is the more remarkable in Justin Martyr, as in giving an account of his own conversion through meeting an aged Christian walking on the shore, Justin found that his teaching on the immortality of the soul was different from the Platonic philosophy which he himself had embraced after long search, and that the Christian teaching was the better and the higher, being a revelation from God in contrast to the natural reasonings of men. The probable explanation is that he was unable to shake himself free from the teachings of philosophy in which he had been engrossed, and through which he had been seeking for life. And it will help to explain the entrance of this Platonic speculation and its consequent influence on the interpretation of Scripture relative both to the nature and destiny of man, when we consider how large a proportion of the Christian writers of the first five centuries were steeped in the training of the schools of philosophy. Athenagoras is an example of this: a native of Athens, a student of philosophy, and doubtless a disciple of Plato, his conversion is said to have come about through his reading the Scriptures with a view to overthrow them. That he did not shake off his Platonism is clear from the result, recorded in the above table.

In every case the Revisers have rendered the Greek 'Hades' by its English transliteration; in every case but one the Authorized Version has rendered it 'hell'; while both R.V. and A.V. have rendered the Greek word Tartarus 'hell,' in the one passage where it occurs:—

HADES (GK.)

Matt. xi. 23. "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell." (And similarly in the parallel passage, Luke x. 15.)

Luke xvi. 23. "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." (From the parable of Dives and Lazarus.)

Acts ii. 27, 31. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. . . . David . . . seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell."

Rev. i. 18. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Rev. vi. 8. "I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."

Rev. xx. 13, 14. "Death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them; . . . and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (This is the only New Testament passage where the A.V. translates the Greek 'Hades' by 'grave.' The Revisers have adopted another reading in the Greek: "O death, where is thy victory?")

TARTARUS (GK.)

2 Peter ii. 4. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." (The Greek for 'cast down to hell' is *Tartarōsas*, lit. having 'Tartarussed' them, i.e. confined them in Tartarus. R.V. gives 'Tartarus' for 'hell' in the margin.)

INDEX

SCRIPTURES QUOTED

	PAGE		PAGE
Gen. i. 17	46	Isa. lxvi. 23, 24	105
„ i. 26	45, 189	„ lxvi. 24	111
„ i. 28	46	Jer. vi. 16	31
„ i. 30	44	„ xviii. 15, 16	124
„ ii. 7	43	„ xx. 11	111
„ ii. 16, 17	77	„ xxiii. 40	112
„ iii. 21	88	„ xxv. 12	124
„ iii. 24	47	„ xxviii. 8	127
„ v. 1, 3	46	„ xlix. 13	125
„ v. 22	47	Ezek. xviii. 20	89
„ vi. 4	127	„ xxxv. 9	125
„ vi. 17	43	Dan. iv. 3	110
„ vii. 14, 15	43	„ xii. 2	111
„ vii. 21, 22	43	Hos. xiii. 9	157, 158
„ ix. 16	110	Hab. iii. 6	110, 118
„ xvii. 8	110	Zeph. ii. 9	125
„ xx. 3	80		
„ xxi. 33	110	Matt. ii. 13	146
Exod. viii. 24	157, 158	„ iv. 8	161
„ xi. 15	110	„ v. 21, 22	96
„ xii. 33	80	„ v. 22	98, 105
„ xxix. 9	124	„ v. 26	132
Lev. iii. 17	124	„ v. 27-30	97, 98, 147
„ xvi. 34	110	„ vii. 13, 14	92, 150
Deut. xiii. 16	124	„ vii. 26, 27	130
„ xxix. 29	32	„ viii. 12	132
„ xxx. 15	89	„ viii. 22	81
„ xxxii. 40	86	„ viii. 25	147
Josh. iv. 7	124	„ ix. 17	147
„ viii. 28	124	„ ix. 24	72
Job xiii. 10	44	„ ix. 43, 45	92
Ps. c. 5	110	„ x. 6	186
„ cxliii. 3	127	„ x. 28	44, 89, 97, 99, 146, 181, 185
Prov. xxii. 28	127		
„ xxiii. 18	90	„ x. 39, 42	149
„ xxiv. 20 (R.V.)	90	„ xi. 23	223
Eccles. i. 9, 10	127	„ xi. 28	83
Isa. viii. 20	39	„ xii. 14	186
„ xxxiv. 1, 2, 7	121	„ xiii. 40-48	130
„ xxxiv. 8-10	125	„ xv. 13	114
„ xxxiv. 11-14	126	„ xv. 24	186
„ xxxv. 10	110	„ xviii. 3	114
„ xlix. 18	86	„ xviii. 7-9	92, 97, 102
„ li. 6, 7 (R.V.)	91	„ xviii. 11	186
„ lviii. 12	127	„ xviii. 14	147

	PAGE		PAGE
Matt. xviii. 34	132	Luke xvi. 9	112
" xix. 17	89	" xvi. 23	223
" xx. 28	92	" xvii. 27	132, 139, 146
" xxi. 19	123	" xvii. 29	132, 147
" xxi. 21, 41	146	" xvii. 32	132
" xxi. 40, 41, 44	132, 137	" xvii. 26-33	138
" xxi. 44 (R.V.)	209	" xvii. 33	149
" xxii. 7	146	" xix. 10	149
" xxii. 8	151	" xix. 14, 27	132
" xxii. 13	132	" xix. 47	146
" xxii. 31-32	179, 180	" xx. 16	132, 146
" xxiii. 15-33	98, 106	" xx. 34-36	121
" xxiv. 48-51	132, 138	" xx. 34-36 (R.V.)	48
" xxv. 30	132	" xx. 35	72
" xxv. 41	108, 114	" xx. 36	181
" xxv. 46	114, 165, 179, 183, 200	" xx. 38	180
" xxvi. 52	147	" xxi. 18	148
" xxvii. 20	146	" xxiv. 45	36
Mark i. 24	146, 169, 190	John i. 4	92, 94
" ii. 22	147, 185	" i. 12-13	53
" iii. 6	146	" ii. 19	157, 158
" iii. 29 (A.V.)	108, 114, 116	" iii. 3	181, 194
" iii. 29 (R.V.)	114	" iii. 6	194
" iv. 38	147	" iii. 16	54, 92, 147, 193, 215
" viii. 35	149	" iii. 18	80
" ix. 22	146	" iii. 36	55, 92, 179, 181
" ix. 41	149	" iv. 10	92
" ix. 42-50	98, 102, 104, 105	" v. 18-29	66
" x. 30	121	" v. 22, 24, 27	74
" xi. 18	146	" v. 23-36	69
" xii. 9	146	" v. 24	92
" xiv. 4	151	" v. 26	94
Luke i. 70	128	" v. 29	49, 92
" iv. 34	146	" v. 39-40	66
" v. 37	147	" vi. 12	150
" vi. 9	146	" vi. 26	66-68
" vii. 22	215	" vi. 27, 32, 33, 35, 37	70, 92, 148
" ix. 24-25	149	" vi. 39, 40	70, 149
" ix. 56	72	" vi. 48, 49	92
" ix. 56 (marg.)	146	" vi. 49, 50	70
" x. 15	223	" vi. 51	55, 70, 92, 123
" x. 28	89	" vi. 53 (R.V.)	70, 71
" xi. 51	148	" vi. 54, 57	70
" xii. 4, 5	97	" vi. 58	92
" xiii. 3, 5	147, 155	" vi. 63	93, 66-68
" xiii. 1-5	138	" vii. 17 (R.V.)	37
" xiii. 5	148	" vii. 38	92
" xiii. 2, 5	132	" viii. 12	93
" xiii. 7	130	" viii. 21, 24	73
" xiii. 33	148	" viii. 51, 52	68
" xv. 4, 6	149, 186	" viii. 57, 58	71
" xv. 8, 9	149	" ix. 32	128
" xv. 17	148	" x. 10	92, 147
" xv. 24	149	" x. 28	147
" xv. 32	150, 186	" xi. 11	72
" xvi. 8	121	" xi. 20	69

	PAGE		PAGE
John xi. 21, 22, 23	74	1 Cor. ii. 5	121
" xi. 25	93, 216	" ii. 7 (Gk.)	120, 153
" xi. 27	69	" iii. 15	137 (note)
" xi. 50	148	" iii. 17	153
" xii. 25	149	" v. 5	92, 151, 187, 189
" xiii. 8	123	" vii. 11	148
" xv. 6	130	" viii. 13	123
" xvi. 13	36	" ix. 25	51
" xvii. 2	72	" x. 9, 10	148
" xvii. 12	148, 150	" x. 11	120
" xviii. 14	147	" xv. 18	101, 148, 155
Acts ii. 27, 31	223	" xv. 24-28	122, 172
" ii. 27	153	" xv. 24	169
" ii. 28	93	" xv. 26	171
" ii. 32	153	" xv. 28	173, 203
" iii. 15	48, 93	" xv. 33	153
" iii. 21	121, 128	" xv. 42-45	52
" iii. 23	152	" xv. 51	72
" v. 20	93	" xv. 50-54 (R.V.)	52
" v. 37	148	" xv. 55	223
" viii. 20	101, 151, 155	2 Cor. ii. 15	92, 148
" xi. 18	93	" iii. 6	93
" xiii. 34	153	" iii. 7	80
" xiii. 35, 36, 37	154	" iv. 3	148
" xv. 18 (A.V. & R.V.)	128	" iv. 4	121
" xvii. 11	31	" iv. 9	147
Rom. ii. 6, 9	49	" iv. 10, 11	82
" ii. 12	147	" iv. 17	112
" ii. 23	49, 51	" v. 1	112
" v. 14	87	" v. 4	55
" v. 17, 21	92	" v. 1-5	52
" v. 17, 18	93	" v. 17 (R.V.)	81
" v. 4	81, 93	" v. 19	203
" vi. 6	172	" vii. 2	153
" vi. 21, 23	73, 92	" ix. 18	112
" vi. 22	55	" xi. 3	153
" vi. 23	89	Gal. i. 4	121
" vii. 9, 11, 13	80	" vi. 8	51, 92, 194
" vii. 9, 10	92	Eph. i. 14	52
" vii. 24	81	" ii. 1 (R.V.)	80
" viii. 6	80	" ii. 2 (R.V.)	121
" viii. 1	82	" ii. 5 (R.V.)	80
" viii. 2, 13	92	" ii. 7	120, 122
" viii. 2, 10	93	" iii. 9	120
" viii. 10	81	" iii. 10	120
" viii. 18, 23	53	" iii. 11 (R.V. marg.)	120
" viii. 21	51	" iv. 22	153
" ix. 22	150	" iv. 30	52
" xii. 2	121	Phil. i. 28	92, 150
" xiv. 15	146	" ii. 16	93
" xvi. 24	112	" iii. 9	151
" xvi. 24 (R.V.)	113	" iii. 20, 21	52
" xvi. 25	113	Col. i. 26	120
" xvi. 25, 26	118	" ii. 22	51
" xix. 22	121	" iii. 4	93
1 Cor. i. 18	92, 148	1 Thess. iv. 14-17	55
" i. 19	147	" iv. 14	72

	PAGE		PAGE
1 Thess. iv. 17, 18	122	1 Peter ii. 9	103
" v. 3	151, 187	" iii. 1	140
" v. 23	41, 189	" iii. 7	93
2 Thess. i. 9	114, 152, 156, 158, 187	" iii. 18-22	143
" ii. 3	151	" v. 10	112
" ii. 10	148	2 Peter i. 4	51, 55
" ii. 10 (R.V.)	116	" i. 4	194, 223
1 Tim. i. 17	42, 217	" i. 11	112
" i. 17 (R.V. marg.)	120	" ii. 1	150
" iv. 10	202	" ii. 1 (margin)	151
" v. 6	81	" ii. 1	160
" vi. 5	152	" ii. 3	150
" vi. 9	151, 152, 187	" ii. 4-6	103
" vi. 15	112	" ii. 4, 5, 6	140
" vi. 16	41, 45	" ii. 9 (R.V.)	140
2 Tim. i. 1	93	" ii. 12	140, 141, 153, 161
" i. 9 (R.V.)	113	" iii. 3-13	174
" i. 10	35, 50, 53	" iii. 6	149
" ii. 10	112	" iii. 6, 7, 9 (R.V.)	161
Titus i. 2	93, 118	" iii. 7	150
" i. 2 (R.V.)	113	" iii. 9	148, 161
Philemon 15	112	" iii. 16	150
Heb. i. 2	120	Jude 1, 2	149
" i. 8	189	" 5-15	142
" i. 11	148	" 5, 6	140
" ii. 14	172	" 7	103, 108, 114, 140
" iv. 12	41	" 10	153
" v. 9	114	" 11-13	140
" vi. 2	114	1 John i. 1	93
" vi. 5	121	" i. 3	82
" vi. 4-8	131	" iii. 2	122
" vii. 16	93	" iii. 9	55
" ix. 12	114, 115	" iii. 14	80
" ix. 14	112	" v. 12 (R.V.)	94
" ix. 15	116	" v. 12	215
" ix. 22	88	Rev. i. 17 (R.V.)	98
" ix. 26 (R.V.)	120	" i. 18	162, 223
" ix. 39	151	" ii. 2	163
" x. 31	194	" ii. 7	47, 93, 162
" x. 39	92	" ii. 10	93, 162, 189
" xi. 3 (R.V.)	120	" ii. 23	163
" xi. 4	88	" iii. 5	93, 162
" xii. 29	106	" vi. 8	223
" xiii. 20 (R.V.)	116	" xi. 15	122
James i. 2	149	" xi. 18	152, 163
" i. 12	93	" xiii. 8	93
" i. 15	73	" xiv. 6 (R.V.)	116
" iii. 6	96, 98, 106	" xiv. 10	199
" iv. 12	92, 146	" xiv. 9, 11	125, 163, 165
1 Peter i. 3	55	" xiv. 11	179, 183
" i. 3 (R.V.)	93	" xvi. 3	44
" i. 4	50	" xvii. 2, 8	151
" i. 7	147	" xvii. 8, 11	164, 190
" i. 18	55	" xvii. 11	167
" i. 23, 24	55	" xvii. 21	165
" i. 25	53	" xviii. 21	184
		" xix. 2	152

INDEX

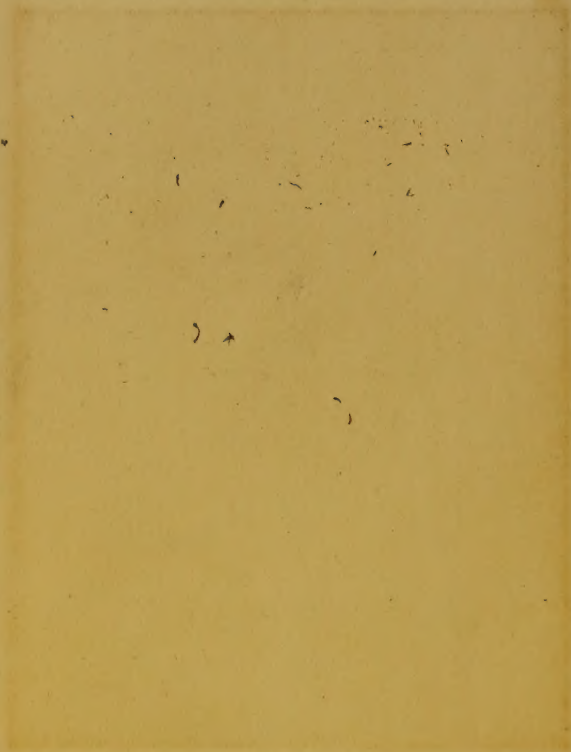
227

	PAGE		PAGE
Rev. xix. 3 . . .	165, 183	Rev. xxi. 4, 5 . . .	198
„ xix. 20 . . .	164, 167, 189	„ xxi. 6, 8 . . .	171
„ xx. 6, 14 . . .	189	„ xxi. 7, 8 . . .	164, 170
„ xx. 10, 15 . . .	164	„ xxi. 8 . . .	189
„ xx. 10 . . .	168, 184, 189	„ xxi. 23, 25 . . .	166
„ xx. 10-15 . . .	170, 179	„ xxi. 27 . . .	47
„ xx. 12, 15 . . .	93	„ xxii. 1, 17 . . .	93
„ xx. 13, 14 . . .	223	„ xxii. 2, 3 . . .	47
„ xx. 14 . . .	171, 188, 189	„ xxii. 2, 14 . . .	93
„ xx. 14, 15 . . .	184	„ xxii. 5 . . .	166
„ xxi. 1 . . .	122	„ xxii. 14, 15 . . .	170
„ xxi. 4 . . .	47, 170, 171	„ xxii. 15 . . .	171

AUTHORS QUOTED

	PAGE		PAGE
Alford, Dean . . .	105	Justin Martyr . . .	220, 221
Athenagoras . . .	221	Luther . . .	63
Augustine of Hippo . . .	62	Mauro, Philip . . .	211
Barnabas . . .	219, 221	Moule, Bishop . . .	109, 179, 180, 182, 183, 198
Beet, Prof. J. Agar . . .	206	Origen, . . .	61
Bingham, R. V. . . .	205	Pearson, Dr. . . .	190
Brown, Prof. A. W. . . .	60	Polycarp . . .	221
Butler, Prof. . . .	206	Pope Leo X . . .	63
Clement of Rome . . .	219, 221	Scotfield, Dr. . . .	185, 186, 187, 188, 189
Clement of Alexandria . . .	220, 221	Stokes, Prof. Sir G. G. . . .	206
Cook, C. C. . . .	84	„ Sunday School Times ” . . .	157
Didaché . . .	221	Tatian . . .	220, 221
Dale, R. W. . . .	206	Theophilus . . .	220, 221
Gladstone . . .	59, 60, 61	Trumbull, C. G. . . .	200
Gordon, A. J. . . .	210	Tyndale, William . . .	63
Hermas . . .	219, 221	Weymouth, Dr. . . .	160
Ignatius . . .	219, 221		
Irenaeus . . .	220, 221		

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